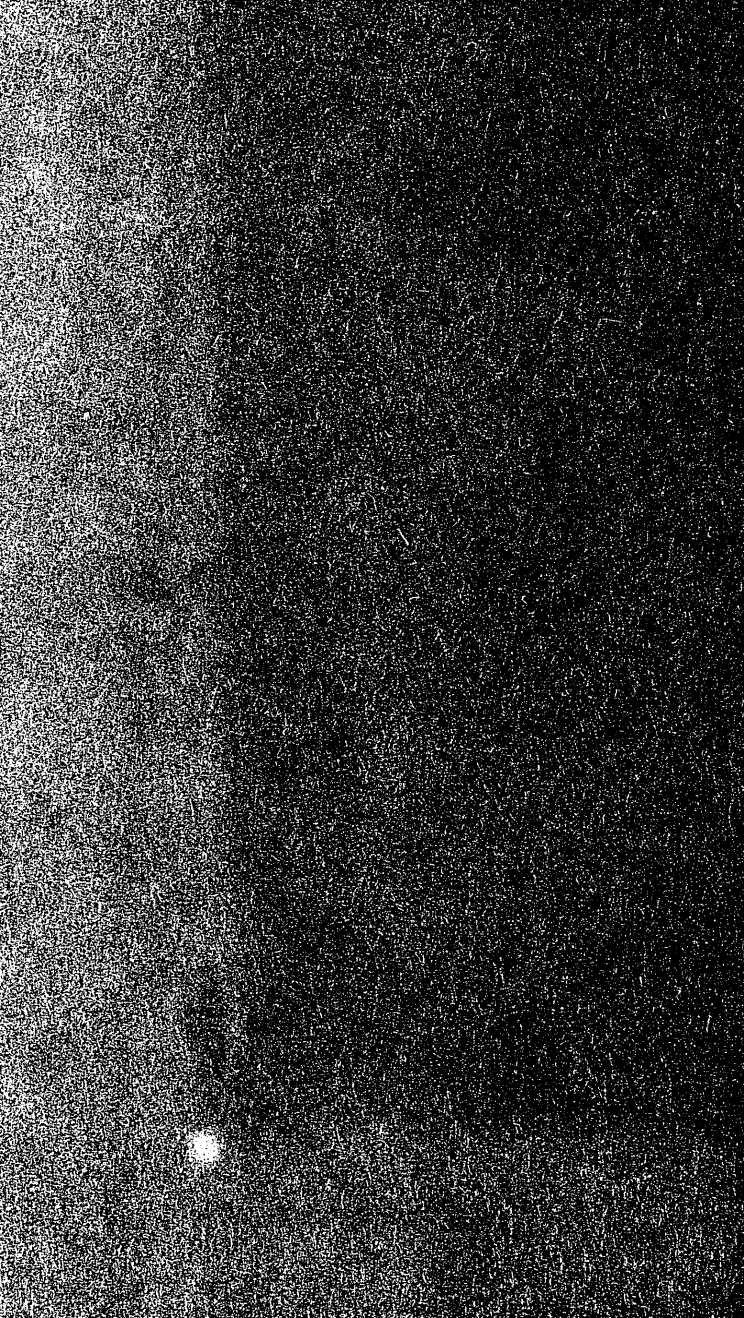

# Old Testament Studies

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# Old Testament Studies

A CLASS BOOK

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# INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

THESE Old Testament Studies are designed as a guide for the study of the Old Testament. They will largely fail of their purpose if they are used apart from the Old Testament. Much so-called Bible study of our day is a study of books about the Bible rather than a study of the Bible itself. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan bears personal testimony in this connection: "It was out of a deep sense of perplexity that I turned from books about the Bible to the Bible itself. The result of my own experience has been a discovery of unity which to me is the final proof of Divinity. Beginning with the Old Testament and moving systematically forward, I discovered that each book demanded another, and that when Malachi had been reached, the whole collection demanded more. In other words, I found that step by step I had proceeded through history and through teaching, all of which pointed toward a Coming One. Then, turning to the New Testament, I found the answer to all the expectation created in the reading of the Old."

Whether this book is studied in class or used by the individual, it should be regarded merely as a suggestive guide and the Old Testament Scriptures should be used as the real text. In the Outlines, which precede the chapters, full Scripture references are given, while briefer references are suggested "for reading and study." These Scripture readings may be assigned as lessons alternately with the chapters in the class book.

These Studies are designed to convey a view of Old Testament history in its broad outlines. No effort has been made to write one more time the history which

has been written again and again. The history can never be written more clearly or more beautifully than it is written by inspired men in the Old Testament itself. Many events and characters, familiar to all Bible students, are passed with slight mention; much that is interesting and important is passed in silence; details are for the most part omitted; the material is treated with one purpose—to convey a connected and continuous view of Old Testament history, as that history reveals God and his redemptive purpose. Such view of the whole sweep of the history, gained by a rapid survey, must contribute to further intelligent study of the various Old Testament books and to a proper appreciation and interpretation of the great characters and doctrines which these books present.

The material herein presented has been used substantially for some years in teaching Old Testament history in various states, in local classes, in educational institutions, in training schools, and in summer assemblies. It is offered in this permanent form at the request of the Sunday School Board's Normal Course Committee with a view to its use in the Convention Normal Course. The author gratefully acknowledges the valuable help and suggestions of the members of this Committee, B. W. Spilman, L. P. Leavell, H. Beauchamp, J. T. Watts, H. L. Strickland, and J. E. Byrd.

The dates given in these Studies are taken from "The Dated Events of the Old Testament," by Dr. Willis Judson Beecher. The student will bear in mind that, until further research sheds more light, exact accuracy cannot be attained as regards Old Testament chronology.

While these Studies have been prepared especially for class work, it is hoped that they may also prove helpful to the general Bible reader.

P. E. B.

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# Directions for the Study of this Book.

FOR those who wish to study the book as a part of the Convention Normal Course, the following directions are given:

1. LESSON ASSIGNMENTS. Ordinarily each chapter will constitute a suitable lesson assignment. Two or three lesson periods should be given at intervals to a review of the lessons previously covered. Thus classes meeting daily would complete the study of the book in about four weeks, while classes meeting once a week would require about four months.

2. EXAMINATIONS—

(1) The teacher will conduct a written examination at the close of the study of the book.

(2) The questions will be selected by the class teacher in accordance with instructions given on page 247.

(3) Members of the class will be asked to answer the questions at one sitting without the text-book or help of any kind. The teacher will ask that each one sign this pledge: "I have neither given nor received help during this examination."

(4) The class teacher will examine the papers of the class, and, on blanks which will be furnished for the purpose, will send the names of those who make the required grade of 70 per cent to the Baptist Sunday School Board, 161 Eighth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tennessee. The proper seal will be sent to be attached to the diploma.

(5) Individual students may pursue the study in their own way. When they are ready for the examination, they will apply to the Sunday School Board for a list of questions with necessary instructions. The questions will be selected from the list given on pages 247–250.

THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD
Edwin M. Gardner
MILES
0 40 60 120 160 200
CASPIAN SEA
ARMENIA
MEDIA
MESOPOTAMIA
ASSYRIA
PERSIA
ELAM
CHALDEA
BABYLONIA
ARABIA
SYRIAN DESERT
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CYPRUS
EGYPT
PALESTINE
Nineveh
Babylon
Shushan
Haran
Charchemish
Hamath
Damascus
Tyre
Megiddo
Jerusalem
Samaria
Bethel
Gilgal
Jericho
Hebron
Beersheba
Kadesh-barnea
Ezion-geber
Mt. Sinai
Goshen
Memphis
Zoan
Red Sea
Euphrates R.
Tigris R.
Nile R.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER I.

## THE WORLD BEFORE ABRAHAM.

Scripture Record—Genesis, chapters 1–11.

Selections for Reading and Study—Genesis 1–4, 6–9, 11).

Time—From Creation to 2,000 B.C.

The Purpose of Bible History.

THE CREATION (Genesis 1, 2).

The Account of Creation.
In Wonderful Agreement with Modern Science.
The Sabbath.
The Marriage Relation.
The Garden of Eden.
The Object of this Account.
The Value of this Account.

THE FALL (Genesis 3).

God's Prohibition.
Satan's Temptation.
Man's Fall.
God's Promise.
The Value of this Record.

CAIN AND ABEL (Genesis 4).

The Offerings of Cain and Abel.
Cain Murders Abel.
Curse and Banishment.
From Cain to Noah.

THE FLOOD (Genesis 6–9).

Exceeding Sinfulness.
Noah Finds Favor.
The Race Destroyed.
Noah's Descendants.

THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES (Genesis 11).

The Tower of Babel.
The City of Babylon.

# CHAPTER I.

## THE WORLD BEFORE ABRAHAM.

*The Purpose of Bible History.*—Bible history traces the dealings of God with men and brings us in gradual unfolding both revelation and redemption. It tells of the revelation which God made concerning himself, and it sets forth the redemption which God, through his incarnate Son, wrought for the race. This history, as has been suggested, is *"His-Story;"* it comes from God; it tells of God; it is designed to lead to God.

Bible history differs from other history in its nature and purpose. Ordinarily, history deals with men and nations, recording their lives and their deeds, and measuring their service and their worth. This history is concerned with the affairs of men and nations only in so far as these may be used to serve the high purposes of divine revelation and teaching. This purpose explains why much attention is given to certain characters and events, while others of apparently equal importance are passed over in silence or with the briefest mention. We will have frequent occasion in these Studies to note this fact. Thousands of years are covered by the first eleven chapters of Genesis, while four books, Exodus, Levit-

icus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, are given to the record of the incidents and revelations of forty years.

God is in all history and manifests himself in the lives of all men and in the affairs of all nations. But God manifested and revealed himself in a peculiar sense in Hebrew history, and God's Spirit in a special way guided and inspired the records of Holy Scripture. Bible history is real history and is to be treated and studied as such. But Bible history is more than ordinary history, and if we would enter into its sacred meaning and message, we must needs approach it with full recognition of its august nature and its divine purpose.

## The Creation.

*The Account of Creation.*—In the first chapter of Genesis we have: (1) a general statement that God created all things, "the heavens and the earth," Genesis 1: 1, 2; (2) a somewhat detailed account of this creative activity, setting forth successive stages in the creation, and indicating the developments of each of the six creative days. (Genesis 1: 3–31.) These developments were as follows:

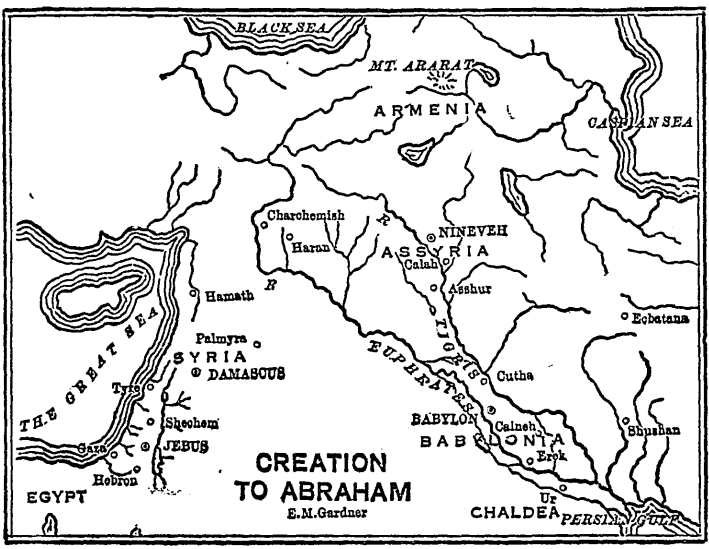
First day. Light was created and divided from the darkness.

Second day. "God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament."

Third day. The seas were separated from the land, and the lower order of vegetable growth came into being.

Fourth day. The sun, moon, and stars were called out.

Fifth day. Fish and fowls, the lower orders of animals were created.




Sixth day. The higher order of animals came into being, and man was created.

The heart of this wonderful account which sets before us the self-existent, creative God, and which solves the deepest of all mysteries, the origin of matter and of man, is set forth in three statements:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

"And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness."

"And God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

*In Wonderful Agreement with Modern Science.*—Certainly it was no thought of Moses to write for scientific purposes a treatise on the origin and structure of the world. Nothing could have been farther from his thinking than the giving of instruction to the rustic shepherd people for whom he wrote as regards the mystery and marvel of scientific problems. It is unscientific to forget the ends for which Moses wrote and the state of the people for whom he wrote. In simple language, adapted to the plain people of his day and of all succeeding ages, Moses sets forth God's creative activity. So far from stumbling over any slight apparent discrepancies between this account and the verdict of modern science, we may well wonder that this ancient narrative follows so closely the order of development as we now read it in the strata of the earth's surface.

*The Sabbath.*—When God had finished his creative work, he rested on the seventh day. "And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made." Thus the Sabbath comes to us from paradise, a part of God's original thought for the race. It was not a burden or a restriction laid upon man, but a blessing bestowed upon him, designed to serve his

best physical and spiritual interests. A proper observance of the Sabbath involves (1) rest, (2) worship, (3) service; which means that on the Sabbath we should rest, we should worship, and we should in some way serve God and our fellows.

Both by his own example and by direct command, God decreed that man should work, and thus work was a part of God's original plan for the race. The happiness of paradise did not involve idleness; Adam was to subdue the earth and have dominion over all living things. The rest required on the Sabbath implies and demands work.

*The Marriage Relation.*—Out of the inspired record of creation, and from the Garden of Eden, comes the marriage relation. Dr. William Smith points out the following principles as growing out of the record concerning the creation of man and woman: "(1) The unity of man and wife as implied in her being formed out of man and as expressed in the words, 'one flesh'; (2) the indissolubleness of the marriage bond except on the strongest grounds; (3) monogamy, as the original law of marriage, resulting from there having been but one original couple, as is forcibly expressed in the subsequent references to this passage by our Lord and St. Paul; (4) the social equality of man and wife as implied in the terms *ish* and *ishah,* the one being the exact correlative of the other, as well as in the words 'help meet for him'; (5) the subordination of the

wife to the husband, consequent upon her subsequent formation; and (6) the respective duties of man and wife as implied in the words 'help meet for him'."

*The Garden of Eden.*—(1) Its Location. It is impossible to determine definitely the location of this garden which the Lord "planted eastward in Eden." Clearly Eden is a general term describing a certain territory in which the garden was located. Of the four rivers named in connection with this land, two are supposed to be the Tigris and the Euphrates, though we are unable to determine concerning the other two. The region of the lower Euphrates in the vicinity of the Persian Gulf answers all the requirements of the Scripture description, and this was probably the location of the Garden of Eden.

(2) Its Happiness. "And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food" (Genesis 2: 8, 9). Everything essential to the happiness of the first pair was provided—fruits and flowers, beauty and every charm. In each other and in God they found blessed communion, while in the care of the garden they found wholesome occupation.

*The Object of This Account.*—It prepares the way for all the history which follows. Moses is writing an introduction to the message of divine revelation and redemption, a message which cul-

minates in the coming of the incarnate Son of God to die for the race. He begins where in the nature of the case he must begin, with God, and in his opening word he shows how this world and man stand related to God. God created this world and called man into being. This fact sends its light down through sacred history, helping to explain God's attitude toward a sinful race, and making explicable that central fact of all history, the voluntary death of the Son of God as an expiation for sin. Link this word of Genesis 1 : 1 with the strong assertions of God's care for men; link it with John 3 : 16; link it with the Cross; immediately we have light on what would otherwise be insoluble mystery. We know why God should care for men; we can even in a measure understand why he became incarnate and died for men—God had created man in his own likeness and image.

*The Value of This Account.*—If we would be impressed with the value of these first two chapters of Genesis, let us imagine, if we can, that these chapters have been stricken out, and that our Bible begins with the story of the fall in the third chapter of Genesis. A list of some priceless things which we would thus lose will suffice: (1) that God *created* the heavens and the earth; (2) that God made man as *a special and distinct creation;* (3) that man was made *in the image of God and after his likeness;* (4) that God *blessed the seventh day and hallowed it* by ceasing from his creative labors; (5) that in mercy

to man's loneliness God made woman as *a companion and help meet for man,* and that man is to leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife; (6) that both man and woman were created *without taint of sin.*

## The Fall.

If it is needful that the message of revelation and redemption shall be introduced by a statement of how the world and man came to be, it is equally needful that such record shall be preceded by a satisfactory explanation of how sin came to be. Is sin an original part of God's creative work? How did sin come? The third chapter of Genesis answers these questions.

*God's Prohibition.*—Having placed the newly created pair in a beautiful garden marked by every pleasure, "God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2: 16, 17).

This command was not imposed arbitrarily, merely to test man: it was given in mercy to warn him. The word, "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," is not a threat, it is not so much the denunciation of punishment; it is rather a statement of an inevitable fact graciously made to guard against harm and evil. If man was to be free, free to serve and worship God, he must also be free to refuse God

and commit sin. In order to be real, freedom of choice must equally embrace holiness and sin; because God would make man capable of worship and obedience, he made him also capable of the choice of evil. He did not leave man alone in his innocence and ignorance, but mercifully instructed him concerning evil.

*Satan's Temptation.*—Over against God's word of command and warning, Satan places a false word of persuasion and temptation. Coming in the form of the serpent which "was more subtle than any beast of the field," the Tempter makes insinuation to the woman concerning God's authority and his goodness: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" In simplicity the woman recited the fact that God had given permission to eat all fruit except of the tree in the midst of the garden, concerning which he had said, "Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Then the evil one declared that God's word was false, and he boldly asserted that God was moved not by desire for their welfare, but was envious of his creatures; "Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

*Man's Fall.*—The woman had pursued a course involving peril; she had given audience to Satan; she had paused to give ear to his evil suggestions. Now she took a step further in peril; she consented to linger and look upon that which

was forbidden. As she lingered and looked, "the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Fascinated by what she saw, and overlooking the fact that death lurked beneath, "she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

*God's Promise.*—The offspring of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. The result of this first sin was swift and terrible. True, "the eyes of them both were opened," but their eyes were opened to look upon their shame with such a consciousness of guilt that when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.

And now lest the guilty pair shall take also of the tree of life and eat, and live forever, God sends them forth from the Garden of Eden after having pronounced a curse upon the serpent, a curse upon the man, and a curse upon the woman. But as they go forth, God gives a promise to save them from despair and to lead them to look for a deliverer. This promise, which for thousands of years constituted a star of hope for the sinful race, was a part of the curse upon the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3: 15).

This promise was essentially vague. The offspring of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent, though in the contest, as the Deliverer crushed him to death, the serpent should bruise his heel.

*The Value of This Record.*—It shows the origin and nature of sin. The reason and necessity for this account of man and the origin of sin must be apparent. This account together with the record of creation in the two preceding chapters shows that sin was not a part of God's original creation, but that it came through the suggestion of an alien evil spirit, and by the free choice of man himself. The account also indicates that God used every precaution to warn and save man from this folly. As in the further progress of the Scripture narrative, we see the persistent efforts of God to save men from sin, efforts culminating at last in the death of the incarnate Son of God, we may by this record of the fall be assured that God is not seeking to amend his own imperfect work or to retrieve mistakes he had himself made in the original creation of the race.

This incident of the first human sin from which all sin has come, standing as it does in the opening chapters of Genesis, sends its light on down through the whole succeeding record of revelation and redemption. God in pity is ever after seeking to deliver man from the perils and death in which he has, voluntarily and in wanton disobedience of God's gracious word of command,

involved himself. The promise which God gave beckoned and comforted the race in its long pilgrimage, until at last it had glorious fulfillment when he that was born of a woman went out to Calvary and bruised the Serpent's head, though in the terrible conflict the Serpent bruised his heel and wounded him so that for three days he lay lifeless in the tomb.

That our first parents should transmit to their offspring the nature which was fallen and marred by their own transgression, was inevitable. This lies in the original constitution of the race. If it seems hard that all the race for all time should be sinful because the first man sinned, we do well to remember that by this same law of headship, all the race for all time and for eternity may be saved from sin because the second Adam did not sin. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

## Cain and Abel.

After the creation and fall, we have recorded in this great introductory section of the Bible three special incidents: the murder of Abel, the flood, and the confusion of tongues. These incidents, illustrating the persistent sinfulness of sin and emphasizing the hopelessness of the race apart from divine interposition, pave the way for the significant step recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis, when God in a sense turns from the race as a whole and begins to reveal and

manifest himself in a peculiar way to Abraham and the nation which he founded. Through this race he will manifest himself to all races.

The record of Cain and Abel may be briefly summed up in four words: offerings, murder, curse, banishment.

*The Offerings of Cain and Abel.*—Concerning the origin of sacrifices, the Scriptures are silent; whether these arose from some unrecorded command of God or grew out of the sense of sinfulness and the desire to make some atonement for sin, we do not know.

Both Cain and Abel brought offerings; Cain, of the fruit of the ground, for he was a tiller of the soil; Abel, of the firstlings of his flock, for he was a shepherd. For reasons which are not stated, but which are clearly connected with the spirit which prompted the sacrifice, God accepted the offering of Abel, but rejected the offering of Cain. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain" (Hebrews 11:4).

*Cain Murders Abel.*—"Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." In vain the Lord admonished him. "And Cain talked with Abel." Perhaps they quarreled with heated words, and Cain rose against his brother when they were alone together in the field, and slew him. This first murder, the more heinous because it was premeditated fratricide, and because it was without reasonable provocation, has laid hold on the

imagination of all succeeding ages, illustrating as it does the swift growth of the principle of sin which began in the garden as disobedience, and quickly developed into violence and bloodshed.

*Curse and Banishment.*—To show for all time his abhorrence of the crime of murder and the certainty that sin cannot go unpunished, God denounces a curse upon the very ground which, as a protest against the crime of Cain, shall not any more yield for him her strength. "A fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth." Lest the presence of Cain prove a menace and a demoralizing influence, and as a further expression of divine disapproval, God drives Cain forth from the community which had begun to grow.

*From Cain to Noah.*—Between the above event, in which Cain slew his brother, and the flood, record of which begins in the sixth chapter of Genesis, there is a lapse of many hundreds, perhaps many thousands, of years. Inasmuch as it is not the purpose of the Scriptures merely to record history, but rather to trace the revelation of God, long years are frequently passed over in silence. Of this period we know but little save that the race wonderfully increased both in numbers and in wickedness. After the death of Abel, Seth was born to Adam and Eve. Following in the steps of "righteous Abel," he became the progenitor of a godly race, while Cain, driven out by Jehovah, went forth to found a race in which violence and lust prevailed.

This long period is illumined by the record of one man who looms distinct on the horizon: "and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5: 24).

## The Flood.

*Exceeding Sinfulness.*—"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them" (Genesis 6: 5–7).

It is scarcely possible to see how stronger language could have been used to describe the deep wickedness which prevailed upon the earth. The statement of God's repentance and regret for the making of man is what is called anthropomorphism, the ascribing to God of language which would under similar circumstances befit men. We are not to suppose that God changed in any sense, since he is eternal and unchangeable.

*Noah Finds Favor.*—Noah, a just man and perfect in his generations, found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God announced his purpose to destroy the earth because of prevailing corruption and violence, and commanded Noah to build an ark, giving him full instructions as to the ma-

terials and dimensions. The word of God, "yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years," is sometimes taken to mean that, as a penalty for sin, the length of human life was to be shortened to one hundred and twenty years. It is rather to be construed as indicating a respite; after the announcement of coming destruction, wicked men should have one hundred and twenty years before the impending doom shall fall.

*The Race Destroyed.*—When Noah, in obedience to God's command, had built the ark and had gathered of all living creatures, the word of the Lord bade him come into the ark with all his house, his wife and three sons—Shem, Ham and Japheth—with their wives. "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth." Dr. William Smith well says, "The narrative is vivid and forcible, though entirely wanting in that sort of description which, in a modern historian, would have occupied the largest space. We see nothing of the death-struggle; we hear not the cry of despair; we are not called upon to witness the frantic agony of husband and wife, of parent and child, as they fled in terror before the rising waters."

It is well to read the sublimely awful story as the inspired writer has described it and let it make its own impression on our minds. Many unimportant details may be passed over and profitless questions may be left unasked. It is needless, for instance, to raise the question as to the extent of the flood, whether it was universal

in the sense that it actually encircled and covered the whole earth. It was certainly universal in that it extended to every part of the earth occupied by the human race.

*Noah's Descendants.*—When Noah came forth from the ark, he built an altar and worshiped God. "And God blessed Noah and his sons and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." The descendants of *Japheth* spread abroad, reaching to the shores of the Mediterranean and into Asia Minor; the race of *Shem* filled southwestern Asia, particularly the Arabian peninsula; the descendants of *Ham* found a home chiefly in Africa.

## The Confusion of Tongues.

*The Tower of Babel.*—While the new race which descended from Noah rapidly increased in numbers and apparently in civilization, wickedness seems also to have grown rapidly. A company of people moved eastward and settled in the alluvial valley of the Euphrates. Here they thought to establish an empire, build a central city which should be their capital; and, despite the explicit promise of God that the earth should no more be destroyed by flood, they assayed to build a tower "which should reach to heaven." This program involved *disobedience* in that God had commanded the race to scatter abroad and replenish the earth; it involved also *unbelief* in that they distrusted the word of God which declared that there should be no more a flood to

destroy the race. This ambitious project was possible because the people were of one language. As a simple means of defeating their plans, God came down and confounded their language; "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city" (Genesis 11:8).

*The City of Babylon.*—The city which the people thus began to found was called Babel, because Jehovah did there confound the language of all the earth; it figures in later history under the well-known Greek name of Babylon.

From the long period of thousands of years which came before Abraham and the beginning of the Hebrew race, the inspired writer has recorded for us in this introductory section of the Bible five incidents:

(1) Creation, to show how the universe and man came to be, and to set forth God's relation to the newly created world and race.

(2) The Fall, to show how sin began to be, and thus to set forth the origin of sin as coming by man's voluntary choice; the nature of sin as being a willful elevation of self against God; and the divine displeasure, as shown in the curse pronounced upon the sinners.

(3) The Murder of Abel, as illustrating the natural growth and violence of sin. In the garden, in its beginnings, *disobedience;* outside of the garden, in its full development, *murder.*

(4) The Flood, which shows how, when the race had utterly failed, God spared the best man living, and in him and his sons gave the race a new probation.

(5) The Confusion of Tongues, in which is set forth the folly and failure of the race which descended from righteous Noah.

These incidents, especially the repeated failure of the race when tried under the most favorable conditions, prepare us for the history which begins with the twelfth chapter of Genesis, in which God in a sense turns to one man, Abraham, and selects one people sprung from that man, to whom he reveals himself and through whom he offers redemption to all peoples. In our next chapter we enter upon that history.

## QUESTIONS.

What is the purpose of Bible history?

Give an account of creation.

What of the agreement of the Mosaic account of creation with modern science?

What was the object of this account of creation?

What is the value of this account?

Tell of the origin of the Sabbath. How is the Sabbath to be observed?

Name some principles suggested as growing out of the record of the creation of man and woman.

Describe the Garden of Eden: (1) Its location, (2) its happiness.

Why did God forbid the fruit of the tree of knowledge?

How were the first pair tempted to sin?

Explain the steps by which Eve was led to disobey.

What promise was given to the guilty couple, and how was this promise fulfilled?

What is the value of this record of the fall?

Give the essential features in the story of the first murder.

Give the essential features in the story of the flood.

What led to the confusion of tongues?

Indicate briefly why each of the five leading incidents of this period is recorded.

Certify to the reading of "Selections for Reading and Study."

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER II.

## THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS: ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

Scripture Record—Genesis, chapters 12–27.
Selection for Reading and Study—Genesis 12–27.
Time—Abraham and Isaac, 2000 to 1724 B.C.

### Abraham and His Wanderings (Genesis 12–25).

World Conditions in Abraham's Day.
The Call of Abram.
Abram's Faith Fails.
Abram and Lot.
Abram and the Promised Son.
Abraham's Faith Tested.
Abraham a World Character.

### Isaac the Son of Promise (Genesis 25, 26).

Isaac and Rebecca.
Birth of Esau and Jacob.
The Covenant Blessing.
Esau Sells the Birthright.
Isaac Blesses Jacob.

# CHAPTER II.

## THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS: ABRAHAM AND ISAAC.

### Abraham and His Wanderings.

*World Conditions in Abraham's Day.*—(1) There was a well-advanced civilization. The inhabitants of the Euphrates Valley and the people who settled in Canaan and Egypt were kinspeople, being alike descendants of Shem. In all of these countries, especially in the valleys of the Nile and Euphrates, there was in Abraham's day a well-developed civilization, with stable government and a cultivation of the arts and sciences. Writing was practiced and communications for commercial and governmental purposes were carried on between widely separated sections. Thus when Abraham left his home in Ur of the Chaldees, he left a high degree of civilization, with great cities and extensive commerce; when he came into Egypt, he found a government many centuries old and a civilization which had long before produced those marvels of architecture, the pyramids. The fact that in Haran, in Canaan, and in Egypt, Abraham found friendly peoples, with whom he could easily communicate and among whom he readily

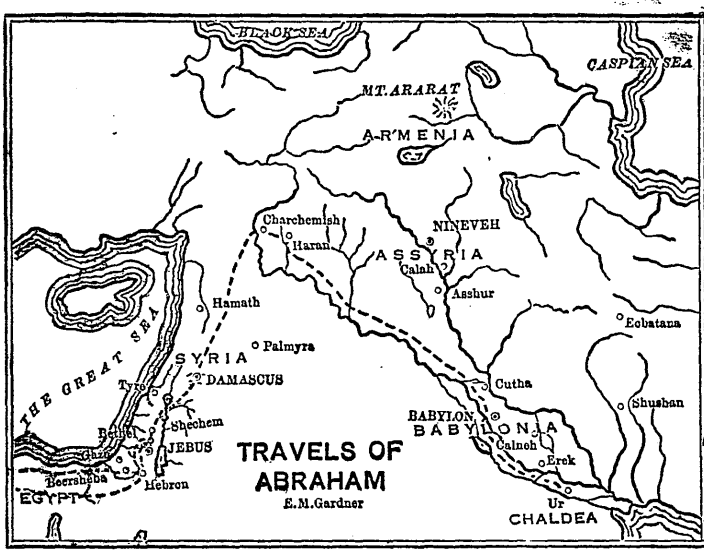
established trade relations, is sufficient proof that these peoples were of the same racial family.

In the ruins of Susa has been discovered the celebrated code of Hammurabi, a king contemporary with Abraham, who ruled in Babylon about 2000 B.C. In this code are two hundred and eighty laws for the government of the people. Measured by the standards of our own day, these laws seem somewhat harsh, but they indicate a sense of justice and attest the advancement attained in that time.

(2) Idolatry was widespread. The records which come to us from Abraham's time demonstrate that both on the Euphrates and on the Nile idolatry was deeply rooted. "The religion of Canaan differed from the religion of Babylon as the primitive worship of people who live among the hills differs naturally from the worship of those who live on wide plains. The province of Babylon was ruled by one mighty king, who was the overlord of all the lesser kings, and this condition appeared in religion, where one great god was over all the lesser gods. The province of Canaan was governed by several hundred kings, each in his own city and on his own hill, and the religion of Canaan accordingly included several hundred gods, each having his own shrine in his own grove, on his own height. But each of these gods was called Baal, which means 'lord.'" (Hodges.)

*The Call of Abram.*—In the midst of the idolatry of his native Chaldea, Jehovah appeared to

Abram (later changed to Abraham) and called him to come to a land of God's choosing to become the father of a mighty nation. The inspired record thus relates this incident, which is full of interest and significance: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's




house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

Abram lived in a day of migrations. In the rich plains of the Euphrates, the people multi-

plied and congested. Strong, restless men led out bands in every direction in quest of unoccupied lands. Some were moved by lust for conquest, some by the lure of gold. But this man Abram, apparently already possessed of wealth and clearly having no ambition for conquest, left his home and went forth not knowing whither he was going. His God had somehow made it plain to him that he would have him go forth from his kindred and from his father's house, and had promised to bless him and, what doubtless especially appealed, to make him a blessing. Just how God made these revelations to Abram, whether he spoke to him audibly face to face, whether in visions and dreams, or in some other unexplained way made clear his will to the soul of his servant, we may not know.

Abram was not disobedient to the heavenly call, but went with God on the long journey. He paused for a time in Haran on the upper Euphrates. Here his father Terah died, and from thence, in obedience to a renewed call, he moved on toward the land which God would give to him and his descendants. Traveling with Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and with his flocks and herds, the patriarch came into Canaan and pitched his tent in Shechem. Beautifully situated between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim at the head of a fertile valley, Shechem was, even in Abram's day, an ancient city. Abram had come at last to the land of which God had spoken to him in Ur of the Chaldees. "And the Lord ap-

peared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord who appeared unto him" (Genesis 12:7).

The passing of Abram through the various lands probably made little impression upon the people with whom he came in contact; a dignified chief, a sheik surrounded by his followers and acompanied by his herds, there was little evidence that he was especially different from other chiefs who came and went. But Abram came at the call of God and went according to God's bidding; and God purposed to bless this lonely chieftain and to make him a blessing to all succeeding generations.

*Abram's Faith Fails.*—Journeying southward, Abram pitched his tent on the pasture lands between Bethel and Ai. Here, as in Shechem, he built an altar and called on the name of the Lord; thus everywhere he went he bore witness to the eternal God. But a famine arose in the land; the earth became parched and the water sources dried up. Abram was sorely pressed; Egypt, well favored and fertile, was only a short distance away, and toward Egypt the patriarch turned his face. If he had stood his ground and waited upon God for deliverance, there would doubtless have been another chapter just here telling how God wonderfully delivered his servant. As the caravan entered Egypt, Abram, fearing for his life, induced Sarai to declare that she was his sister. This weak bit of deception

brought Sarai into peril, from which she was mercifully delivered by divine interposition. For this falsehood, a folly especially detested by the Egyptians, Abram was sternly reproved by Pharaoh, who had unwittingly taken a man's wife into his palace.

*Abram and Lot.*—As if to confess his mistake in going down into Egypt, Abram on his departure from Egypt made straight for Bethel, "unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first." He came out of Egypt with a sad blemish upon his good name, but "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." His nephew, Lot, had accompanied him in all his journeyings, not as his employee or his partner, for "Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents."

The close association of two mighty shepherds with their vast flocks and herds produced rivalry among the rude herdmen. Naturally they contended for the best pasture and fought for the springs of water. Such unseemly contentions must have grieved the soul of Abram, more especially as they would bring his God into disrepute in the eyes of the heathen, in the midst of whom they dwelt. Abram, with marked generosity, called Lot to the summit of a neighboring hill, and bade him survey the land and make his own choice. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thy-

self, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou wilt depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (Genesis 13: 8, 9). One would think that surely Lot will meet such a noble spirit with like generosity, but Lot lacks the faith and the spirit of Abram; "and Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere. . . . Then Lot chose him all the plain of the Jordan." And though wickedness prevailed exceedingly in Sodom, Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom.

Left alone on the quiet hills, Abram was again visited and reassured by Jehovah, who declared that Abram's seed shall be as the dust of the earth, "so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." Abram drifted south to Hebron, while Lot went to live in Sodom. Word reached Abram through a man who had escaped the general capture, that Chedorlaomer and allied kings from Mesopotamia had defeated the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and had taken captive their people, with Lot also. With characteristic energy, Abram assembled three hundred and eighteen trained servants of his household, and, joined by certain confederate chieftains, hastened in pursuit of the retreating kings. Finding them careless from recent victory and resting in supposed safety, Abram fell upon them in a sudden night attack, utterly routing them. Recovering Lot and the

other captives with their goods, he restored them to their homes.

A few years later Abram again rescued Lot, this time from the doom denounced upon the cities of the plains. When God would visit destruction upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he announced his purpose to Abram, who at once fell to praying for the deliverance of the wicked cities. Out on the plains of Mamre, the aged patriarch urged his plea until he received assurance that if ten righteous men could be found in Sodom, the city should be spared. But so great and so general was the wickedness of the city, not even ten righteous men could be found, and the threatened doom fell on the cities of the plains; not however until in accordance with the spirit of Abram's prayer, Lot had been led forth from Sodom.

*Abram and the Promised Son.*—We enter now upon new and different scenes in the life of Abram. Henceforth, we are concerned with the fulfillment of God's promise concerning the seed in whom all nations should be blessed. As the years passed, Sarai remained childless, and, losing hope that the promise might be fulfilled in her own offspring, in accordance with the custom of those days she persuaded Abram to take Hagar, her Egyptian maid, as his handmaid in order that through her the long-deferred promise might be fulfilled. This failure to wait upon the divine will and this violation of the original law of marriage brought its natural and inevita-

ble results. Proud by reason of the high station to which she was elevated as the secondary wife of the patriarch, Hagar in a moment of temptation mocked her mistress, and in anger Sarai thrust her out and she wandered away in the wilderness which bordered Egypt. Bidden of God to return and submit to her mistress, she was told that the son to whom she was to give birth should be called Ishmael, and that from him should spring a hardy race. But this son was not to be the son of the promise.

Thirteen years passed, and with each succeeding year Abram's difficulties increased. At length God appeared again to renew the promise, this time confirming the covenant by significant changes in the names of Abram and Sarai. Abram (high father) is to be henceforth Abraham (father of a multitude), while Sarai is to be henceforth Sarah (princess).

At this time also as a further seal of the promise and as a perpetual pledge that this race was to be holy unto himself, God gave the sign of circumcision, which was to be binding upon every member of the Hebrew commonwealth, even the servant and the stranger.

At length when Abraham was more than one hundred years old, and when in the face of natural impossibility hope might have ceased to hope, Sarah gave birth to the long-promised son, and in accordance with the joy of her own heart and in obedience to the divine command, she named him Isaac (laughter). On the occasion

of the feast given in honor of his weaning, Ishmael in some way offered insult to Isaac. This aroused Sarah's old-time enmity toward Hagar and her child, and in response to her demand Abraham reluctantly sent forth from his camp the handmaid and her son. Divinely delivered from famishing, Ishmael went away into the wilderness of Paran, and became the father of the wild Arab tribes, which afterwards filled that region.

*Abraham's Faith Tested.*—As we have companied with Abraham in his journeyings from Chaldea to Canaan and up and down in Canaan, we have been able to note the advancing and enlarging revelation of Jehovah; with increasing intimacy the patriarch walked with God, and with ever greater boldness talked face to face with the Holy One. We come now to that event in the life of Abraham for which all the preceding years have been a preparation, that manifestation of faith which richly entitles him to be called the "Father of the Faithful" and "the Friend of God."

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham." "These things," referred to, are the varied trials and experiences through which he had been led. It is not God's way to bring upon us supreme tests until we have been thoroughly prepared. God *did tempt* Abraham, not with a view to seek out and reveal weakness, but to develop and illustrate for all time the integrity and strength of his faith. God appeared to Abraham in Beersheba and commanded

him to take Isaac, the child of promise, three days' journey to Mount Moriah and there offer him for a burnt offering, "And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of" (Genesis 22: 2). It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to think ouselves into the position of Abraham and to realize how sharp was this test. Knowing as we do the later provision by which Isaac was spared, we must find it all but impossible to enter into the difficulties which Abraham faced. Through forty years and more, God had been promising, and Abraham had been awaiting, the birth of this child. Enwrapped with all of Abraham's hopes and with all of God's purposes and promises was this son, this "only son Isaac." To offer this child would destroy the last human means for the fulfillment of God's covenant promises. With a faith which had already delighted the heart of Jehovah, the patriarch took Isaac the three days' journey to Mount Moriah, built there an altar, bound Isaac his son, "and Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son." It is enough; Abraham has shown under the severest possible test that he believes and will obey Jehovah. An angel of the Lord calls to him to spare his son, and directs to a ram in a near-by thicket, which he is commanded to offer in sacrifice instead of his son.

After this event nothing of great consequence is recorded in the life of the patriarch. He lived to be a hundred and seventy-five years old, continuing until Jacob and Esau were fifteen years of age.

*Abraham a World Character.*—Abraham holds a unique place in history. Among the millions of his day, he alone engages the attention and the interest of the millions of our day.

In three distinct realms he is held in highest veneration; the Christian world looks back to him as the father of the faithful; the Jewish world gives him a preëminent place as founder of the Hebrew race; the Mohammedan world, numbering 200,000,000, regards him with no less esteem and affection than do Jews and Christians.

And yet Abraham possessed not the elements or accompaniments which usually go to make men live in the admiration of their fellows. He wielded no military power, he built no empire, he created no work of art, nor left any piece of literature. Even as a religious character, he wrought no miracle; he wrote no word of Scripture; he lived out his days apparently without making any special impression upon the people about him. Abraham has lived, and richly deserves to live, in the hearts of millions of God-fearing men and women because in days when the nations had wandered from God and gone into the darkness of death, Abraham realized the personality and spirituality and holiness of God, dared to put his life, his fortunes, and his destiny

into the hands of God, walked with God through life's long journey, and, as the Friend of God, talked with Jehovah face to face.

### Isaac the Son of Promise.

*Isaac and Rebekah.*—The face of Abraham in the inspired record gradually fades away, while Isaac comes out with increasing distinctness. Sarah is dead and the patriarchal home is bereft. Abraham will in a measure fill the vacancy and insure the choice of a suitable help meet for his son, who was now of mature years, by sending Eliezer, his aged servant, back to Haran to bring from among his kinspeople a wife for Isaac. Rebekah is chosen, and doubtless having in mind the covenant promises of Jehovah, she readily consents to return with Eliezer. When the caravan arrives in Canaan, Isaac is "meditating in the field at eventide," a phrase which seems to indicate a prayerful and worshipful mood.

*Birth of Esau and Jacob.*—For twenty years this union remained childless until in response to Isaac's entreaty, God gave twin sons, Esau and Jacob. As the one born first, Esau would have been expected to inherit the family birthright and thus to become the heir of the promise. But before their birth Jehovah had given clear indication that the natural order would be reversed and that the elder would serve the younger.

Esau was a man of the chase, a daring hunter, while Jacob was a mild-mannered man who pre-

ferred the quiet of the home. While Esau grew to be his father's favorite, Jacob came to be the favorite of Rebekah.

*The Covenant Blessing.*—We come now upon the one commanding event in the quiet and comparatively uneventful life of Isaac. As heir of the promises made to his father Abraham, as the man in whom these promises were to be fulfilled and through whom these blessings were to be transmitted to later generations, Isaac holds a place of distinct and commanding interest. When the infirmities of age began to press upon him and he had reason to feel that the end might be approaching, he felt constrained to settle finally the question of his successor and to determine as between his sons, Esau and Jacob, which should inherit the covenant blessings and transmit them to his offspring.

As the elder, Esau would naturally be entitled to these birthright blessings which would ordinarily involve the headship of the clan with a special portion of the family possessions, and which in this case involved the heirship of eternal promises and spiritual blessings. Before the birth of Esau and Jacob, God had clearly indicated the choice of Jacob over Esau. Many things had transpired to confirm this pre-natal prophecy, not least among which was the character of Esau himself, who had grown up a sensual and selfish man. Any doubt which might have lingered in this matter should have been removed by his barter of this very birthright to his

brother Jacob, and by his recent marriage against the will of his parents to heathen women.

*Esau Sells the Birthright.*—The sale of his birthright to Jacob, as shedding light upon the character of both Esau and Jacob, and as having a bearing upon Isaac's bestowal of the patriarchal blessing, demands special notice. Esau, a cunning hunter, had been out all day and had met with scant success in the chase. He was ravenously hungry, and coming among the tents of his father's household he smelled the odor of red pottage of lentiles being cooked by Jacob. Naturally impulsive, and now driven by hunger, he demanded that his brother should give him a portion of the pottage. Jacob, who had long coveted the birthright blessing which belonged to his brother, felt that now at last his opportunity had come, and, taking advantage of Esau's ravenous hunger, he offered him his pottage in exchange for his birthright. The offer was immediately accepted, and Jacob had Esau sware that the birthright should be his.

It is difficult to say whether Esau or Jacob is more blameworthy in this transaction; Esau despised his birthright, thought lightly of the wonderful spiritual blessings involved in it, while Jacob, in shrewd and unbrotherly fashion, bargained for this high spiritual boon, as if Esau had a right to sell it or he a right to buy it. It is in Jacob's favor that he did prize the birthright privilege which was despised by his brother;

there were within Jacob spiritual aspirations and possibilities which Esau lacked.

*Isaac Blesses Jacob.*—In spite of clear indications that the divine choice had fallen upon Jacob, Isaac, influenced by his partiality for Esau, determined to bestow the blessing upon his favorite son. Rebekah, influenced by her love for Jacob and encouraged by the indications that he was the favored of Jehovah, resolved to defeat the purpose of Isaac and secure the coveted prize for Jacob. Isaac, who was now one hundred and thirty-seven years old, infirm and practically blind, sent Esau to the field to bring venison, promising on his return to bestow the blessing. Rebekah, overhearing this promise and resolute in her determination to carry out her own wish, induced Jacob to personate his brother Esau, putting the skin of a kid over his neck and hands and feigning his brother's voice. The aged Isaac had his suspicions aroused and only reluctantly bestowed the coveted blessings. Scarcely had Jacob left the presence of his father, when Esau came in from the chase to find that his brother had already received the blessing.

The four characters in this incident stand in sad light. Isaac and Esau, for personal and selfish reasons, would thwart the clearly revealed will of God in the matter of the heir to the covenant blessing; Rebekah and Jacob have not the faith to await God's time, and they unbelievingly

and impatiently hasten to prevent the setting aside of the divine plan.

While it seemed proper to relate these developments in connection with the life of Isaac, they shed much light on the after career of Jacob, which we are to study in the next chapter.

## QUESTIONS.

What of world conditions in Abraham's day as regards: (1) Civilization, (2) idolatry?

Describe the call of Abram: (1) How? (2) Whence? (3) Whither? (4) What promise?

Tell of the failure of Abraham's faith.

Give an account of the separation between Abram and Lot, tracing on the map the after movements of each.

Tell (1) of the birth of Ishmael, (2) of the change in the names of Abram and Sarai, (3) of the birth of Isaac.

Relate the incident which sets forth the testing of Abraham's faith.

Why do we call Abraham a world character? How did he attain this eminence?

Tell of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

Tell of the birth of Esau and Jacob.

What in this case was involved in the birthright blessing?

What light does the sale of the birthright shed on the character of Esau? Of Jacob?

Under what conditions did Isaac bestow the blessing on Jacob?

Certify to the reading of "Selections for Reading and Study."

Name the chief events in Bible history to the close of this chapter.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER III.

## THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS: JACOB AND JOSEPH.

Scripture Record—Genesis, chapters 27–50.
Selections for Reading and Study—Genesis 28–35, 37, 39–50.
Time—Jacob and Joseph, 1844 to 1643 B.C.

### JACOB AND HIS TWELVE SONS (Genesis 27–36).

Jacob's Flight from Home.
Jacob at Bethel.
In Padan-aram.
Back toward Canaan.
Jacob Meets Esau.
Jacob the Last of the Patriarchs.

### JOSEPH THE DELIVERER OF HIS PEOPLE (Genesis 37–50).

Sold into Egypt.
Exalted to High Position.
Delivers from Famine.
Brings Israel into Egypt.
A Character of Rare Charm.

### ISRAEL IN EGYPT (Genesis 46–50; Exodus 1).

Blessed.
Oppressed.
Multiplied.
Civilized.

### WHY THIS LONG PERIOD IN EGYPT?

Fulfillment of Prophecy.
Egyptian Caste and Prejudice.
Perils in Canaan.
Contact with a Great Civilization.

# CHAPTER III.

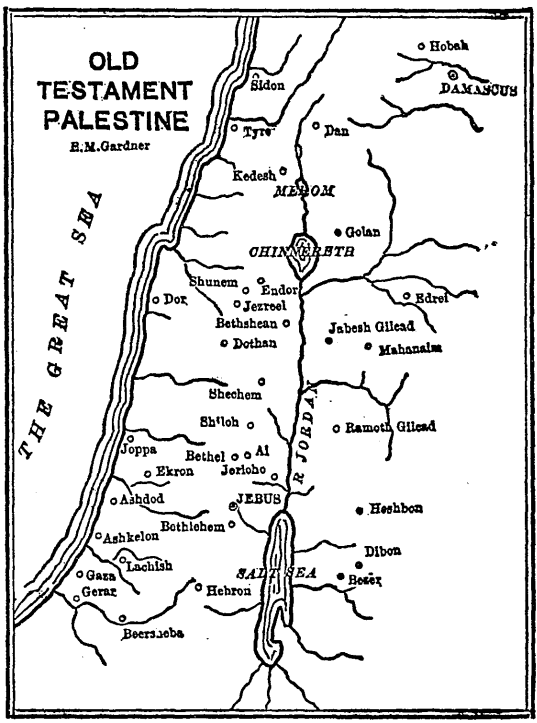
## THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS: JACOB AND JOSEPH.

As in the last chapter, so in this, we study father and son. The inspired writer paints for us four memorable portraits, and we do well to linger and familiarize ourselves with these four wonderful characters. Among them there is the greatest possible variety, as there are also many developments which warn us that we are not to regard these patriarchs as perfect or sinless men. Nevertheless as they loom on the horizon they are monuments of what divine grace can do in human lives.

### Jacob and His Twelve Sons.

In our study of Isaac's career we had some glimpses into the character of Isaac's crafty and designing son. Jacob appears in no fair light as we see him bargaining with his brother for the birthright and taking advantage of his brother's hunger. He appears, if possible, at a greater disadvantage when he feigns to be Esau, and deceiving his blind and aged father secures the covenant blessing. Chastened by suffering, purified by communion with God, this Jacob whose

early career is marred by craft and deceit becomes Israel, a Prince with God. A chief value of the life of Jacob lies in the view thus given of wonderful transformation under the pressure of trial and through fellowship with Jehovah.




*Jacob's Flight From Home.*—The artful strategem of Rebekah was successful, and Jacob took by deceit the birthright blessing. At first Esau was filled with grief for his loss. Later he gave way to bitter anger and resentment against his

brother. He resolved to slay Jacob, but in order to spare his aged father, he would defer his vengeance till after the death of Isaac. Rebekah was not slow to perceive the peril in which her favorite stood, and on pretext of wanting that Jacob should have a wife of his own kindred, rather than of the heathen people of the land, she persuaded Isaac to send him back to secure a wife in Padan-aram, or Haran, where some branches of the family seem to have lingered after Abraham crossed the Euphrates on his way to Canaan.

*Jacob at Bethel.*—Jacob hastened northward through the hill country which afterwards belonged to the tribe of Judah, traveling some forty miles the first day, and at nightfall reached Bethel, sacred as the shrine of his grandfather Abraham. Here amid hallowed memories, heart-sore and weary, the exile from home took a stone for a pillow and laid himself down to rest. While he slept he dreamed, and his dream doubtless reflected his state of mind that first night away from home. A ladder, or better a stair, reached up from his feet into the heavens; on this stair angels were ascending and descending, a light from heaven fell along its length, and God himself stood at its summit, saying, "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."

Dimly, perhaps, but nevertheless really, Jacob had prized the spiritual blessings of God's cove-

nant, and now the higher aspiration of his soul found expression in a solemn vow, in which he plants himself on the word of Jehovah: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28: 20–22).

This prayer breathes reverence, devoutness, and confidence. The suppliant asks five things at God's hand:

(1) He asks for God's presence; "if God will be with me."

(2) He pleads for God's keeping; "and will keep me in this way that I go."

(3) He craves God's providing care; "and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on."

(4) He begs that God will bring him back to his father's house; "so that I come again to my father's house."

(5) He desires that this return shall be "in peace." This appears to be the climax of his petitions. His departure was far from *being in peace.* As destined to inherit the birthright and the covenant blessing, Jacob looks forward to his return to his father's house, and, possibly with his thoughts on his angered brother and at the same time taking a wider range, he prays that his return may be in peace.

*In Padan-aram.*—Reaching at length the end of his journey, Jacob meets at the well-side Rachel, the beautiful shepherdess daughter of his mother's brother, Laban. This uncle welcomes the exile to his household, and speedily there springs up an affection between Jacob and Rachel. The artful and selfish Laban readily accepts the offer of Jacob to serve him seven years for the hand of his daughter. This transaction has been lightly treated as "a custom of the land." There appears to be no reason to think that any such custom existed, and we are to suppose that Jacob practically sold himself into bondage for his loved Rachel. That Rachel and Leah felt this as a sting of disgrace is indicated in their own words of explanation for leaving their father's house: "Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money" (Genesis 31 : 14, 15).

Rachel was beautiful and well favored, while Leah seems to have had some weakness or blemish of the eyes. When the seven years had passed, Laban, taking advantage of the custom which prevailed in the East of bringing a bride veiled to her husband, gave Leah to Jacob instead of Rachel, and defended his act by an appeal to the laws of the land, which forbade that a younger daughter should be given in marriage before her elder sister. The crafty Laban proposed that Jacob should serve him yet other

seven years for Rachel. To this Jacob readily assented, "and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Thus fourteen years passed and Jacob had given his labor as compensation for his wives. Six years longer he continued to serve Laban, and by superior shrewdness, and possibly by the favoring hand of God, he came to possess much cattle and extensive flocks.

*Back Toward Canaan.*—The relations between Jacob and his father-in-law, which had been none too cordial, became strained and Jacob had reason to fear for his own safety. Directed by a vision of the "God of Bethel," Jacob determined to take his wives and children and his possessions and return to the land of his fathers. Fearing that Laban might seek by force to detain him, Jacob, having obtained the consent of his wives, gathered his family and his flocks and herds together, and, taking advantage of the absence of Laban on a three-days' journey at a sheepshearing, slipped away across the Euphrates and over the level plains toward his native Canaan. Learning of the departure of his son and daughters, Laban pursued them over the plains, and but for a special warning from God he might in his anger have wreaked vengeance upon Jacob. His indignation was increased because his household gods had been taken, Rachel having secreted these and carried them away. Delivered by divine intervention from one peril, the heir of the

promise is soon to face another and much more serious menace.

*Jacob Meets Esau.*—Twenty years before, Jacob had fled from the face of Esau, who, stung by a sense of injustice in the matter of the taking of the birthright, had sworn to slay his brother. Had Esau's anger subsided, or had it smoldered through the years only to break out into a murderous flame on the first sight of the man who had wronged him? These questions faced Jacob and gave him concern as he thought of a possible meeting with Esau. Unlike his former self, he is not now disposed to evade the issue; he frankly sent word from the uplands of Gilead to Esau in the region of Mount Seir south of the Dead Sea announcing his coming. When the messengers returned, bringing word that Esau was coming with four hundred armed men, "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed."

As at Bethel, so again at the fords of the Jabbok, the better elements of Jacob's nature asserted themselves and he evidenced a clear vision of God and a conscious dependence upon divine protection.

Jacob took the precaution to divide his company into two groups with the hope that if one was destroyed the other might in the confusion escape. Then he betook himself to prayer. The next morning, in order to appease the wrath of his brother and possibly also in order to satisfy the cupidity of his followers, he sent to Esau in three successive groups rich presents, each time

sending with the gift a conciliatory message. At length he sent his wives and his sons over the brook; "and Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This one who wrestled with him was none other than Jehovah himself. When the mighty wrestler saw that he prevailed not, he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh and his thigh was out of joint. Unable longer to continue the struggle, Jacob ceased to wrestle and began to cling; "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Thus he prevailed, and meeting Esau in peace, this crisis of his life was safely passed. In memory of this signal victory he is given a new name; "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Arriving in Shechem, Jacob lingered for a time, and, directed by God in a vision, he made his way to Bethel, where he built an altar and worshiped God with all of his company.

Besides his daughter, Dinah, eleven sons were born to Jacob in Haran, and now, as the family journeyed southward, his beloved Rachel died after giving birth to a twelfth son, whom Jacob named Benjamin. Coming again to "his father's house," he found his father Isaac yet alive, and together they made their home in Hebron.

*Jacob the Last of the Patriarchs.*—Strictly speaking Jacob was the last of the patriarchs, though in a general way we consider the time from Abraham to Moses as the patriarchal

period and we frequently reckon Joseph as one of the patriarchs. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Jehovah granted personal appearances and direct communications. These ceased with Jacob and were not afterwards granted save in rare and somewhat exceptional instances.

Joseph inherited the twofold material blessing of the birthright, his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, being given each an equal place and inheritance with the brothers of Joseph. Judah came into the spiritual inheritance of the birthright, his father pronouncing the prophetic blessing, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come" (Genesis 49: 10).

## Joseph the Deliverer of His People.

We come now to study the interesting career of Joseph, who ranks among the most charming and best loved characters in Old Testament history.

*Sold Into Egypt.*—Jacob had located in Hebron, and his sons were up in the neighborhood of Shechem keeping the flocks and herds. Already the father had manifested partiality for Joseph the son of his loved Rachel. The "coat of many colors" given him by his father was a garment with long sleeves and flowing skirt, signifying special dignity and indicating the purpose of the father to bestow upon him the blessing of the firstborn. As reflecting sentiments

and aspirations stirring in his own breast, Joseph dreamed two dreams, in each of which his brothers bowed in obeisance to him. Angered by these dreams and stung by the father's favoritism for Joseph, the brothers hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. When the father sent him to visit the brothers and bear them a message they planned to slay him, but Reuben, the eldest, moved by sympathy for the aged father, persuaded them to cast him into a pit, intending to come later and deliver the lad and restore him to his father.

A company of Midianitish merchantmen came by, making their way toward Egypt, and at the suggestion of Judah the brothers sold Joseph to these men for twenty pieces of silver, and he was carried away into Egypt. The brothers then killed a kid and dipped in its blood Joseph's garment which was the father's gift, and bore it away to Jacob, leaving with the father the impression that his son had been torn by some wild beast. His grief must have been the more severe as it followed close upon the death of Rachel. Joseph's life in Egypt falls into these divisions: (1) As a slave in Potiphar's house, where he rose to a place of trust; (2) as a prisoner through the malignity of Potiphar's wife, when again he rose to the highest position; (3) as ruler of Egypt, elevated by the king because of his wise interpretation of the king's dreams.

*Exalted to High Position.*—As a slave Joseph attained a place of trust in the house of his mas-

ter, so that we have this remarkable record: "And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat." Upon the false accusation of his master's wife, Joseph was cast into prison. Here he so deported himself as to secure the respect and command the confidence of his guards and associates.

When the Pharaoh dreamed two dreams, one of seven blasted ears of corn devouring seven full ones, the other of seven lean kine devouring seven fat kine, Joseph interpreted the dreams to mean that there should be seven years of abundant harvests, these to be succeeded by seven years of famine, which should completely devour the fruits of the years preceding. Winning the favor of the court and the king by his wise interpretation and by his prudent speech, Joseph was lifted from the prison and given, next the king, the highest place in the realm. Through the seven years of plenty in which the earth brought forth in handfuls, vast storehouses and granaries were, under Joseph's direction, filled with grain in preparation for the coming seven years of famine.

*Delivers from Famine.*—Being thirty years of age at the time of his elevation at the beginning of the seven years of plenty, Joseph was probably forty years of age when his brothers, driven by the famine which had made itself felt even in Canaan, came down to Egypt "to buy corn." Of course, they could not recognize, in this mighty prince,

the brother whom they had sold more than twenty years before; but they had not changed so much, and doubtless Joseph was expecting that among those who were coming from afar his brothers would also come; he instantly recognized them. He faced now the delicate task of removing the bitterness which they had so unjustly felt against him and of bringing into Egypt his father's house that he might preserve and bless them.

The steps in the slow process by which he accomplished these things are full of human interest, while the tact and gentleness of Joseph have endeared him to all succeeding ages. There are many beautiful touches of pathos; as when the aged trembling father gathered together such store of nuts and honey as the impoverished country of Canaan afforded and sent them to the supposedly stern prince in Egypt in the hope that thus the prince might be appeased; also, when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers and the bitterness of years was healed.

*Brings Israel into Egypt.*—Convinced by the wagons and supplies which Joseph had sent, and strengthened by special divine revelation, Jacob with his household made his way into Egypt. Kindly received by Pharaoh, the sons of Israel were given the rich pasture land of Goshen lying between the Nile and the Arabian desert. The aged patriarch made it clear that only "to sojourn" in the land were they come. Both Jacob and Joseph, in their departing requests, empha-

sized this fact which was of vital moment in the life of the chosen people.

Jacob, when death was approaching, charged his sons that they should not bury him in the land of strangers, but should take his body back to the land of his fathers and give him burial along with Abraham and Isaac. When his end was near Joseph made the elders of Israel promise that when the Lord should lead them up out of Egypt to the land promised to his fathers they would carry with them his bones. The embalmed body of Joseph, awaiting a final burial, bore witness, through the long centuries which followed, to the purpose and promise of God to deliver his people.

*A Character of Rare Charm.*—The varied experiences through which Joseph passed, with the singular beauty of his life, furnish many lessons of practical value.

(1) The enduring power of early training. So deep was the impress of his home life and early training that, though removed in youth to a corrupt and idolatrous land where he was sorely beset by temptation, Joseph stood firm in his devotion to high ideals and in his fidelity to the God of his fathers. Consider also in this connection the inspiring career of Daniel.

(2) The evil of parental favoritism. The marked partiality of Jacob for his son Joseph constituted a deep wrong in the family life, and this foolish policy sowed the seeds of hatred and murder, which afterwards bore such terrible fruitage.

(3) The significance of youthful dreams. Joseph's dreams indicated the aspirations which stirred within him, and forecast the career which awaited him. His father rebuked him, and his brothers hated him, for his dreams. This was possibly the deepest wrong which Joseph ever suffered. We owe it to our dreaming youths to regard with tender sympathy their dreams.

(4) Faithfulness in obscure spheres. The key-note of Joseph's life is faithfulness. He was faithful in his father's house, and thus became overseer of his brothers. He was faithful as a slave in Potiphar's house, and thus became master of all that belonged to his lord. He was faithful in the prison, and thus attained first place among his fellow-prisoners. Piety and godliness constitute no bar to success in the affairs of life.

(5) The lesson in personal purity. "There are few subjects," says Dr. F. B. Meyer, "which require more notice both from speakers and writers than this great subject of chastity. There is no one sin which sooner corrupts the heart, weakens the intellect, and destroys the body than the sin of impurity."

(6) The lesson in filial reverence. The reverent regard shown by Joseph for his aged father, his tender ministries, his affectionate presentation of the rustic Jacob before the royal Pharaoh, his visit to his father's dying bed to receive his last blessing, these and other touches of filial devotion, together with his kindly and forgiving spirit toward the brothers who had wronged him,

constitute no small element in the fine charm which invests this beautiful character.

(7) A divine plan for each life. Joseph sees in his varied and wonderful experiences the hand of God, and humbly recognizes the divine plan for his life. "God sent me before you," he says to his brothers, "to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. *So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God*" (Genesis 45: 7, 8).

## Israel in Egypt.

From the death of Joseph to the Exodus, a period of some 250 years, we have no record in the Scriptures. What we know of the chosen people during this period may be set forth in four words.

*Blessed.*—Under the Pharaoh of Joseph's day, and his successors for a long period, the children of Israel were blessed and prosperous. Many of them resorted to agriculture, probably a few became merchants and traders, while a goodly number continued to be herdmen and shepherds as they had been in Canaan.

*Oppressed.*—Some time after the death of Joseph "there arose a king who knew not Joseph." This king no longer remembered gratefully the national debt to the great Hebrew, and, fearful of the growing power of the children of Israel, he began to oppress them. This oppression is marked by three stages: (1) The men of Israel

were forced to labor in hard bondage, building cities and public works; (2) when this failed to prevent the increase of the people, effort was made to secure through the midwives the destruction of all male children born among them; (3) this failing through the refusal of the midwives to comply with the cruel edict, the king of Egypt ordered that every male child born among the Hebrews should be thrown into the Nile River. During this period Moses was born.

*Multiplied.*—Israel went down into Egypt "seventy souls," though possibly the retainers and trained servants, of whom Abraham had in his house at least three hundred and eighteen, may not have been taken into account. By the time of the Exodus they had become 600,000 fighting men, from which figures we may infer that they comprised a total population of about 2,000,000 souls. The rich soil, the warm climate, and most of all the favoring hand of God, may be considered as explaining this wonderful increase.

*Civilized.*—The sons of Jacob went into Egypt, shepherds, crude and rough. Their descendants came out of Egypt with the impress of a great civilization. Evidences are abundant that Israel on coming out of Egypt brought with them much of culture in statecraft and practical arts. It would do violence to the facts to suppose that because they had been bondmen these people were therefore serfs or slaves. The readiness with which they accepted the proposal of Moses to lead them out of Egypt is in itself sufficient

proof that so far from their spirit being broken they cherished a desire for freedom and were willing to stand for their rights.

### Why This Long Period in Egypt?

Strange are the ways of God. To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Jehovah had reiterated his promises to give to their descendants the land in the midst of which they lived. And just when the seed of Abraham began to multiply and we are led to expect the fulfillment of the long-deferred promise, they were driven by famine into Egypt and were permitted to remain there hundreds of years. Why this strange providence? We are able to suggest some things which may shed light on the problem.

*Fulfillment of Prophecy.*—God had distinctly declared to Abraham that his seed should go into Egypt, and had even stated to him the duration of the stay there. "Know assuredly that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years" (Genesis 15: 13).

*Egyptian Caste and Prejudice.*—Social conditions in Egypt insured that Israel would grow to be what God meant they should be, a peculiar and separated people. Inasmuch as shepherds were "an abomination unto the Egyptians," a strong wall of caste and prejudice prevented the Israelites from intermingling with their Egyptian neighbors.

*Perils in Canaan.*—It had already become manifest that if the sons of Israel remained at this time in Canaan they would intermingle and marry among the peoples of the land and thus lose their distinctness; or, as is indicated in the affair of their sister, Dinah, they might become entangled in quarrels with their neighbors which would lead to their own destruction.

*Contact with a Great Civilization.*—The people of Israel were thus in their formative days as a nation brought into contact with the best civilization of ancient times. We have already seen that when the Hebrews came up out of Egypt they brought with them the impress of Egyptian enlightenment and culture.

## The Book of Genesis.

We are indebted to the book of Genesis for all accounts which precede the life of Moses, a period of 2,500 years and possibly much longer. What a priceless book is this! Take this book from us, and you take away the inspired account of creation, of the entrance of sin, of the flood; you take away the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; you leave in darkness the origin of the Hebrew race and the beginning of God's wonderful revelation of himself to that race. In a word, without Genesis our Bible would be sadly incomplete. If one of the Gospels should be taken we would have three Gospels left; if the Acts of the Apostles should be taken we could reconstruct much of that wonderful history from

the Epistles and other sources; if Romans were taken we could, from the Gospels and other Epistles, build up almost entirely that matchless discussion of vital gospel doctrines. If Genesis should be taken we would be bereft of inestimable information and invaluable records. If we might make comparison of the books of the Bible, is it too much to say that Genesis is the most indispensable book in the sacred library?

## QUESTIONS.

Wherein lies the chief value of the life of Jacob?

Account for Jacob's flight to Haran.

Tell of Jacob at Bethel.

Relate happenings in Padan-aram.

Why did Jacob return to Canaan?

Describe the meeting between Jacob and Esau.

Relate the incidents which led to the sale of Joseph into Egypt.

How did Joseph come to be ruler of Egypt?

Tell of the deliverance from famine.

What do we know of the children of Israel between the death of Joseph and the birth of Moses?

Why this long period in Egypt?

Indicate the value of the Book of Genesis.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER IV.

## MOSES AND THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

Scripture Record—Exodus, chapters 1–18.
Selection for Reading and Study—Exodus 1–12.
Time—Birth of Moses to Departure from Sinai, 1578 to 1498 B.C.

### THE PREPARATION OF MOSES (Exodus 1–4).

The Nations in the Time of Moses.
Israel in Bondage.
The Birth of Moses.
The Flight of Moses and His Desert Life.
The Call of Moses.
An Era of Miracles.

### THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT (Exodus 5–18).

The Contest with Pharaoh.
The Ten Plagues.
Israel Goes Out of Egypt.
The Passover Instituted.
Why into the Desert?
The Journey to Sinai.

# CHAPTER IV.

## MOSES AND THE DEPARTURE FROM EGYPT.

BETWEEN the closing chapter of Genesis, which records the death of Joseph, and the opening chapters of Exodus, which tell of the birth of Moses, there is an interval of some 250 years. The events of this long period are set forth in the four words already studied, *blessed, oppressed, multiplied, civilized.*

### THE PREPARATION OF MOSES.

*The Nations in the Time of Moses.*—(1) *In Egypt.* An ancient civilization prevailed. In the Nile delta and along the river for half a thousand miles lived a people who had grown rich and great by reason of the wonderful fertility of the soil and through the spoils of foreign conquest. A mild-mannered but strong race, they were ruled in the autocratic fashion of the day by hereditary rulers who had genius both for war and government and who by forced labor carried on extensive public works. The fear which arose lest the Israelites should, in case of war join with some enemy, does not indicate weakness on the part of the Egyptians, inasmuch as a possible

force of 600,000 men such as the Israelites could muster, situated in the very borders of Egypt, might well cause anxiety.

(2) *In the Arabian Desert.* This territory, usually described as desert or wilderness, where Moses spent forty silent years and where later Israel wandered for forty years, was then, as now, inhabited by nomad tribes who shifted about as the exigencies of water and pasture required. These tribes were related to the Israelites, being descendants of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

(3) *In Canaan.* In the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Canaan was occupied by scattered peoples who, as agriculturists and herdmen, had no settled government. Since those days various nations, notably the Philistines in the southwest, the Canaanites in the central part, and the Amalekites in the south, had come into possession of the land, though these for the most part had no strong natural bond, certain cities or groups of cities having their own kings. This divided condition may help to account for the remarkable military successes of the Israelites under Joshua.

*Israel in Bondage.*—The first chapter of Exodus sets before us the sad afflictions of the chosen people. When Joseph was dead and his service to Egypt was forgotten, and when the children of Israel multiplied exceedingly, the Egyptians, fearful for the rapid growth of this subject race, resolved to reduce and crush them.

*The Birth of Moses.*—At this time, and under these conditions of oppression, Moses was born. His parents, Amram and Jochebed, dared to defy the edict of the king concerning the destruction of male children and hid the child three months. When, by reason of his growth, he could no longer be hid, his mother resorted to a wise ruse, and through the ready wit of his sister Miriam, the mother was chosen by the daughter of Pharaoh to care for the child until such time as the princess should claim him for her own son. Destined to a great career, Moses received a careful and varied training: (1) Under the care of his Hebrew mother, who succeeded in putting on her child an impress from which he never got away; (2) in the court of Pharaoh where, under the hand of the princess, he received the training ordinarily given to youths of royal blood; (3) in the great seats of Egyptian learning. Thus when he came to manhood, he "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

*The Flight of Moses and His Desert Life.*—The decision of Moses to forsake the courts of Egypt and ally himself with his despised and oppressed kinsmen could hardly have been the result of a sudden impulse; the purpose must have been gradually formed in his heart as he came to maturity. A crisis came and a decision was forced when, by slaying an Egyptian for the wrong treatment of an Israelite, he was compelled to flee for safety to the back side of the

Arabian peninsula. Here he joined himself to a desert tribe descended from Abraham, and became son-in-law and shepherd to a priest named Reuel, or Jethro, as he is usually called. Thus, "by faith Moses when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11: 24, 25).

The forty years which Moses spent as a herdman in the desert brought him training for the high mission to which he was destined: (1) He came to a mastery of that fiery temperament which asserted itself in the killing of the Egyptian oppressor; (2) he came into a knowledge of the country in which for forty years he was to lead the people of Israel; (3) he learned in the quiet of the desert solitudes to know God in that wonderful fullness which revealed itself in the after years.

*The Call of Moses.*—While the children of Israel were groaning beneath their afflictions and crying to God by reason of their bondage, God was moving, at the back side of the desert, toward their deliverance. Appearing to Moses in a bush which burned, and yet was not consumed, in the vicinity of Mt. Sinai, God revealed himself as Jehovah (I am that I am), and commissioned him to go to Pharaoh's court with Aaron his brother, and demand the release of Israel.

Forward as Moses had been in the ardor of youth forty years before to undertake this task,

he is now so reluctant and hesitating as to incur the displeasure of God and to require the utmost of persuasion and command. By two miracles, the turning of the rod into a serpent and the making of his hand leprous and healing it again, Jehovah reassured his servant. These two miracles were to be repeated in the presence of Pharaoh and if he did not hearken, Moses was to work a third miracle of turning water into blood.

*An Era of Miracles.*—These miracles wrought for Moses in the desert are the first miracles on record, and we enter now upon a time of wonderful miraculous demonstration never afterward witnessed save in the days of our Lord. Some supernatural works had been wrought before, such as the turning of Lot's wife to a pillar of salt, the gift of Isaac and others when the parents were past age, but these, though essentially miraculous, would hardly be considered as miracles in the sense of "signs" such as God gave to confirm the commission of Moses. It seems meet that in claiming Israel as his own people and in launching the nation upon its divine mission, God should vindicate his power and reveal himself in mighty works.

## The Departure from Egypt.

*The Contest with Pharaoh.*—Moses and Aaron discreetly assembled the elders of Israel, wrought the signs concerning which God had given them commandment, and recounted all the words and promises of God. "And the people believed: and

when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." We come now to that awful conflict which for almost a year waged between the obstinate king of Egypt and the King of all the earth. Doomed from the beginning to ultimate failure, Pharaoh fought against God, until at last, crushed and humbled by ten successive plagues, or "strokes," he was glad enough to yield to Jehovah's demands and let the people go. When they had but scarcely gone forth from the land the haughty king hardened his heart anew and pursued them only to receive a final stunning blow in the destruction of the flower of his army in the Red Sea.

*The Ten Plagues.*—These "plagues" are thought to have begun perhaps in June, while the culmination in the slaying of the firstborn occurred certainly in the spring, March or April. They were: (1) Water turned into blood, (2) frogs, (3) lice, (4) flies, (5) murrain of beasts, (6) boils upon men and beasts, (7) hail, (8) locusts, (9) darkness, (10) death of firstborn. In this connection difficulty has been felt along four lines.

1. To what extent were these visitations *due to natural causes?* If in the days of the fathers there was a ready tendency to accept the supernatural, in our day the pendulum seems to swing back in the other direction, and many are now disposed to seek natural explanation for the mir-

acles of Scripture. It is assuredly true that God, in all his dealings with his creatures, has shown partiality for the orderly and usual working of nature's laws. Without doubt some of these plagues were in line with natural grievous visitations which have for thousands of years visited the land of Egypt, such as frogs, flies, lice, locusts, and hail. The divine and supernatural, however, clearly appear in that in each case the scourge came and went at the word of Moses, and also in that the distress fell upon the Egyptians while the Lord's people in Goshen were spared. The reality of these plagues as supernatural strokes is evidenced, (1) by the historic fact that a race of slaves was permitted to march away from Egypt, and (2) by the further fact that forty years after when Israel approached the promised land there still lingered among the inhabitants of Canaan the memory of Jehovah's wonderful deliverance of his people (Joshua 2: 10), as also (3) by the fact that these marvels lived in the hearts of Israel through the generations which succeeded.

2. How shall we reconcile God's direction to Moses to demand of Pharaoh that he allow Israel to *go a three days' journey into the desert for sacrifice,* when it is clear that from the beginning it was the divine purpose that Israel should go out of Egypt to the land promised to their fathers? It is frequently said that this was a thinly veiled statement that could hardly have deceived Pharaoh. It is perhaps better to say

that God would adjust his demands to Pharaoh's weakness and blindness with a view to making obedience as easy as possible. If Pharaoh had yielded to this natural and proper demand, which was the more reasonable as the sacrifices of Israel would have been an abomination in the eyes of the Egyptians, it would have been comparatively easy by gradual stages to come to the point of yielding to God as further demands were made. Jehovah mercifully adapts his demands and his plans to the weakness of his creatures.

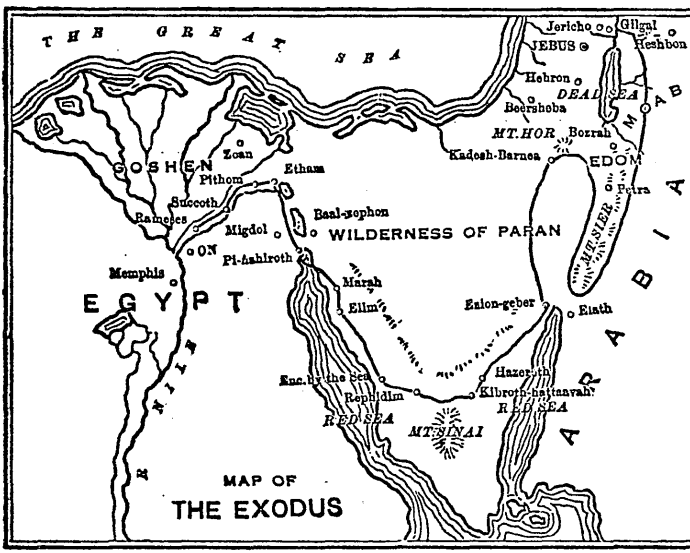
3. How are we to account for the statement that *"God hardened Pharaoh's heart?"* It is not to be expected that we can solve all the mysteries which lie in the dealings of God with men. It has been pointed out that twice ten times in this history is the expression *hardening* used in connection with Pharaoh. "Now it is remarkable that of the twenty passages which speak of Pharaoh's hardening, exactly ten ascribe it to Pharaoh himself and ten to God. . . . After each of the first five plagues the hardening is expressly attributed to Pharaoh himself. Only when still resisting after the sixth plague do we read that the Lord made firm the heart of Pharaoh. But even so, space for repentance must have been left, for after the seventh plague we read again (Exodus 9: 34) that 'Pharaoh made heavy his heart;' and it is only after the eighth plague that the agency is exclusively ascribed to God" (Edersheim).

The fact seems to be that when Pharaoh had hardened his heart denying and defying God and had thus sealed his doom, God hardened, "made strong," his heart to the end that for all time God might show in Pharaoh the swiftness and certainty of his wrath against willful and rebellious sinners.

4. What of the statement that the children of Israel *"borrowed of the Egyptians,"* when they knew that they were going out of Egypt not to return? This seeming difficulty, of which much has been made, disappears entirely when we read the passage as it is rendered in the Revised Version. Here the words "ask" and "asked" are found instead of "borrow" and "borrowed." The Israelites, when starting on the long desert journey, requested gifts of the people whose slaves they had been, and received willing offerings from those who, in the presence of God's wonderful works, were conscience-stricken. These varied gifts of the Egyptians doubtless account in some measure for the ability of the children of Israel to build in the desert the rich and costly tent of meeting known as the tabernacle.

*Israel Goes Out of Egypt.*—Through the greater part of a year the battle raged between Pharaoh and the God of Israel; blow after blow fell upon Egypt; humbled and temporarily yielding, the king again and again seemed to give up the fight, only to harden his heart when in mercy the distress was relieved. During this time the

elders and people of Israel were gradually prepared for the final week; and doubtless extensive preparations were made for the departure from Egypt. The people numbered six hundred thousand men which probably indicates a total population of two millions. The removal of so great




a population with their possessions and flocks and herds would require much time and effort.

The plagues had steadily increased in severity until a climax was reached when the death angel passed over the land, destroying the firstborn of man and beast among the Egyptians. Crushed by this terrible blow, Pharaoh and his people entreated Israel to leave, and were ready to hurry them out of the land.

*The Passover Instituted.*—In the dreadful night when the angel of Jehovah went through the land to destroy the firstborn of man and beast, the blood of the slain lamb on the door-posts of the Israelites was the signal for the death-angel to pass over and spare these homes. In commemoration of this merciful deliverance, the Israelites ever afterwards celebrated the Passover feast. Its chief features were, "(1) the offering of a *single victim* for each Paschal company; (2) the *Paschal meal* with which the festival began; (3) the eating of *unleavened bread* during the whole time it lasted."

*Why into the Desert?*—The land of Canaan, long promised to the seed of Abraham, lay only a few hundred miles away over an ancient road, and might have been reached in a fortnight. Why did Moses lead the children of Israel into the remote desert instead of directly into Canaan?

(1) The inspired record gives the chief reason, "And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt" (Exodus 13: 17).

(2) The chosen people required for a season the quiet of worship and training which would be possible only in the desert life to which Moses led them. They were just out of slavery, their sense of national unity needed to be developed, and they required to be instructed in the things of God.

*The Journey to Sinai.*—The time from the departure of the people to their arrival before Mt. Sinai was six weeks. This journey was marked by striking interventions of divine power.

(1) *At the Red Sea.* God parted the waters of the Red Sea and made Israel to pass over dry-shod. When the people had gone forth, and Pharaoh and his courtiers had reflected upon their defeat and loss, they rallied the flower of the Egyptian army and hastened in pursuit. When this army with its six hundred chariots came into view the Israelites found themselves completely hedged in, an armed force in the rear, the sea in front, and no way of escape. Terrified at first, but presently reassured by the word of Jehovah, the people marched straight forward. Meantime God caused a strong east wind to blow the waters back and they marched across on dry land. When the Egyptians dared to follow in pursuit, at the word of Moses and the stretching forth of his rod, the waters rolled in again, destroying the hosts of Egypt. This signal deliverance, which was forty years afterwards paralleled by the crossing of the Jordan dry-shod, was celebrated by a song composed by Moses and sung by all Israel. (Exodus 15: 1–19).

(2) *The Pillar of Cloud.* God vouchsafed to Israel a special symbol of his presence in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. This visible symbol served to keep the tribes together in travel and constituted a constant reminder and assurance of the divine presence in the midst of Israel.

(3) *Manna.* As soon as the stores brought out of Egypt were exhausted, God began to give as food the manna which through all the forty years of wandering was found each morning lying like frost on the ground.

(4) *Water from a Rock.* When the water which they had brought with them was exhausted and the people murmured, calling upon Moses to give them water, the Lord directed Moses to smite the rock, "and there shall come water out of it so that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. This miracle of making water flow from a rock was repeated near the close of the wilderness wandering, when Moses was commanded to speak to the rock and smote it instead, being excluded from Canaan for his failure to sanctify Jehovah in the eyes of Israel.

## QUESTIONS.

Name important events in the Old Testament to the time of Moses.

Describe conditions in Egypt, in the Arabian desert, and in Canaan at the time of the Exodus.

Indicate three stages in the education of Moses.

Tell of the flight of Moses from Egypt and of his life in the desert.

Describe the call of Moses.

Why should we expect that this period would be especially marked by miracles?

Tell of the contest with Pharaoh.

To what extent were the plagues due to natural causes?

What of the demand to go a three day's journey into the desert when they did not intend to return?

Explain the statement that God hardened Pharaoh's heart.

What of the statement that the Israelites "borrowed of the Egyptians"?

Tell of the departure from Egypt and explain why the children of Israel did not go direct to Canaan.

What was the significance of the Passover?

Indicate some miracles which were wrought on the way to Sinai.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER V.

## THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.

Scripture Record—Exodus, chapters 19–40; Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Selections for Reading and Study—Exodus 35; Numbers 13, 14, 20; Deuteronomy 1–5, 31, 32.

Time—Arrival at Sinai to Death of Moses, 1498–1459 B.C.

### BEFORE MOUNT SINAI (Exodus 19–40, and Leviticus).

Mount Sinai.
The Ten Commandments Given.
The Golden Calf Destroyed.
The Tabernacle Built.
  Its Pattern.
  Its Materials.
  Its History.
The Levitical Laws Given.

### FROM SINAI TO KADESH-BARNEA (Numbers 10: 33—12).

The Spies.
Israel Defeated.

### THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.

In the Arabian Desert.
The Fiery Serpents.

### PREPARATION FOR CANAAN (Deuteronomy).

Moses' Farewell Addresses.
Moses' Life in Outline.
Moses Dies on Mt. Nebo.
Burial of Moses.

# CHAPTER V.

## THE WILDERNESS WANDERINGS.

### Before Mount Sinai.

*Mount Sinai.*—For a whole year the chosen people camped in the vicinity of Mount Sinai, which seems to have been a peak in the general range called Horeb, in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. "No one who has approached the Ras Sufoafeh through that noble plain, or who has looked down upon the plain from that majestic height, will willingly part with the belief that these are the two essential features of the scene of the Israelitish camp. . . . The awful and lengthened approach as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. . . . The cliff, rising like a huge altar, in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might not be touched,' and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the stillness of the plain below" (Dean Stanley).

Here is an unprecedented sight. A people numbering two million souls, with their flocks and herds and all of their possessions, is assem-

bled far away in the wilderness to worship Jehovah and to receive his commands. Their black tents range along the valley as far as the eye can reach, while back in the recesses of the hills are the sheep and cattle brought from the rich plains of Goshen. Such a scene was never witnessed before or since, when a whole nation presented itself in the desert before God.

During this year spent before Sinai four events stand out in special distinctness.

*The Ten Commandments Given.*—When the people had sanctified themselves according to the word of the Lord, they assembled at Mt. Sinai, and "there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud." Jehovah first spoke "the ten words" audibly to the assembled people; later these words were written by the finger of God on tables of stone, and Moses brought these tables down the mountain.

This giving of the law was august and glorious beyond words. Nothing was wanting in the physical environment to lend impressiveness; the solitude of the desert, the somber mountains with their beetling crags, the fire and smoke, the audible voice of Jehovah, all combined to make this event grand and solemn.

The first commandment declares the supremacy of God and claims for him the first place, forbidding the worship of any other.

The second commandment declares God's spirituality, and forbids the making of any material likeness or image of God.

The third commandment safeguards the name by which Jehovah is known. So high and holy is God that his very name is to be regarded with reverence and must not be lifted up unto vanity.

The fourth commandment implies a previous knowledge of the Sabbath in that the people are called upon to "remember" the Sabbath day; it demands that the day be observed as sacred or holy unto Jehovah.

The fifth of the commandments sets up father and mother as deserving of honor and puts the word of divine authority back of parenthood. To enforce this commandment a promise of long life is attached.

The sixth commandment safeguards human life. Later this law was reënforced by the enactment that whosoever should shed man's blood, by man should his blood be shed.

The seventh commandment demands social purity and as interpreted by our Lord forbids even impure thinking.

The eighth of the ten commandments stands for the rights of property and safeguards human rights.

The ninth commandment forbids false witness and is thus exceedingly broad.

The tenth commandment pierces to the inner secrets and desires of the heart and forbids the harboring of any evil wish for that which belongs to one's neighbor.

"Such law was never given by man; never dreamed of in his highest conceptions. Had man

only been able to observe it, assuredly not only life hereafter, but happiness and joy here would have come with it. As it was, it brought only knowledge of sin. Yet forever blessed be God: 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ'" (Edersheim).

*The Golden Calf Destroyed.*—Moses lingered in the mount and the people grew discouraged and impatient; perhaps their leader had been consumed in the fire that burned on the mountain top. Reverting to the idolatry of their fathers in Mesopotamia, or more probably influenced by the idolatry of their recent Egyptian neighbors, they called upon Aaron to make for them a golden calf to represent God. Around this image the people gathered and indulged in noisy and licentious orgies. As Moses descended from the mount, with Joshua his minister, they heard the shouts in the camp below. Aroused and indignant over this flagrant violation of the second commandment, Moses ground to powder the calf which Aaron had made, and, scattering it over the waters of a near-by stream, compelled the people to drink of the water.

*The Tabernacle Built.*—(1) *Its pattern.* We are distinctly told (Acts 7: 44 and Hebrews 8: 5) that Jehovah showed to Moses in the holy mount the plans according to which the tabernacle was to be built. Clearly these directions included the small as well as the great things involved.

(2) *Its materials.* These were the richest and finest that could be provided. Indeed, the rich-

ness of material used and the fineness of the structure have led some unthinking critics to question whether such workmanship was possible to a race newly escaped from slavery. The material doubtless came from the gifts of the Egyptians, while we are distinctly told that certain men were divinely endowed for the task of devising and constructing this tent of meeting.

(3) *Its history.* The tabernacle continued through upwards of 400 years to be the center for Israel's worship. It remained in use presumably until the erection of Solomon's temple, though what was done with it when the temple was occupied is not recorded.

*The Levitical Laws Given.*—Apart from the "Ten Words" we are not clearly told how the Mosaic law was given. While much of this legislation must have been directly revealed, all of it being inspired, it would seem that in civil and ecclesiastical cases Moses gave judgment under God's guidance and these judgments became precedents or laws, being later written down for the guidance of the nation.

### From Sinai to Kadesh-barnea.

*The Spies.*—At the close of the year before Mt. Sinai, the children of Israel broke camp and marched away to Kadesh-barnea, evidently expecting to press on into the promised land. As a matter of precaution (Deuteronomy 1: 22), they chose men to go before them to spy out the land and report as to its fertility, the nature of

its inhabitants and the best way of approach. From among the leading men of each of the tribes, twelve men were selected for this hazardous undertaking. These went up through the land and returned after forty days bringing with them fruits which indicated the exceeding fertility of the soil. The twelve agreed that it was a goodly land flowing with milk and honey as Jehovah had said, but ten of them brought an unbelieving report, asserting that the land was inhabited by giants with walled cities, and declaring that the people were not able to take the land. Thus they made the hearts of Israel to melt with fear. In vain did brave, believing Caleb and Joshua seek to stay the evil tide, saying, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us" (Numbers 14: 7, 8).

*Israel Defeated.*—The ten had swept the people with their weak and fearful words and the tides of discouragement had set in too strongly to be stayed. A movement was started to depose Moses and Aaron, to elect new leaders, and retrace their steps into Egypt. Rallying next day and recovering somewhat from their panic, the people came together and requested Moses to lead them up into the land. Moses declared that he would not go, neither the ark of God, and that the presence of God would not be with them. In the same spirit of unbelief which prompted their former refusal to go, they now resolve to go up,

in disobedience to the word of Moses. Kadesh-barnea is on the southern border of the Negeb or South Country, some twenty or thirty miles south of Beersheba. From Kadesh-barnea the people go up to battle against the inhabitants of the southern section of Canaan, only to be defeated and chased before their enemies.

## The Wilderness Wanderings.

*In the Arabian Desert.*—After this event through a period covering almost thirty-eight years we have scarcely any record of the chosen people. We are not to suppose that they traveled constantly during this long period, but rather that they moved from place to place, possibly in the vicinity of Kadesh-barnea, as the exigencies of grass and water might require. When the older generation which so signally failed was dead, the people came again to Kadesh-barnea, resolved to go in and take the land of Canaan. The most direct route was that which led north immediately into the land. Instead of this, Moses led the people by a circuitous way around the Dead Sea with a view to entering Canaan from the east across the Jordan.

*The Fiery Serpents.*—It was during this final journey that the people were bitten by fiery serpents, Moses erecting a brazen serpent, upon which when the people looked, they were healed. (See John 3: 14, 15.) The defeat of Sihon king

of the Amorites, and Og king of Bashan, gave to the Israelites possession of the land east of the Dead Sea and of the River Jordan.

### Preparation for Canaan.

The hosts of Israel had come at last to the borders of the land promised to their fathers. During the long years of waiting and wandering in the wilderness they were gradually moulded into a nation; through the instruction of Moses and by experiences of divine provision and protection they had entered into an enlarged knowledge of Jehovah. Before they marched across Jordan some interesting and important events transpired.

*Moses' Farewell Addresses.*—Because, in smiting the rock when God had bidden him speak to it, Moses failed to sanctify God in the eyes of the people, he was not to be permitted to enter the promised land. As the crowning service of his long life, Moses assembled the people and delivered a series of addresses in which he recounted God's wonderful dealings, reminding them of their own sinful murmurings and of God's loving faithfulness. Deuteronomy (Second Law) records these addresses, the book being so named because it is a second statement of the Law. In strength of expression, in breadth of statesmanship, in warmth of patriotism, in clearness and vigor of thought, these addresses hold a unique place even in inspired literature. These addresses have been thus characterized:

First address (chapters 1–4)—Retrospect.
Second address (chapters 5–26)—Exposition.
Third address (chapters 27, 28)—Exhortation.
Fourth address (chapters 29, 30)—Renewal.
Last address (chapters 31–34)—Farewell.
—H. C. Moore.

## Moses' Life in Outline.

1. Forty years in Egypt—Trained,
   (1) In the home of his parents,
   (2) In Pharaoh's court,
   (3) In the universities of the day.
2. Forty years in the Desert—Learned,
   (1) Self-mastery,
   (2) The desert country,
   (3) The deep things of God.
3. Forty years with Israel—Became,
   (1) Leader and Law-giver,
   (2) Prophet of Jehovah,
   (3) Writer of Sacred Scripture.

## Moses Dies on Mount Nebo.

While his natural strength was unabated and his eye undimmed, Moses yet knew that the day drew near when he must die. Having delivered his farewell address and pronounced a last solemn benediction, he goes out of the camp from among the people and ascends a high peak in the mountains of Moab. From this peak he is permitted

to survey the land which he is forbidden to enter. How sublimely simple is the narrative. How thoroughly human Moses appears. He shows no abnormal resignation, but craves to enter and see the land and asks God to set aside the decree which has gone forth. Those who see in God's dealings with Moses at this time only the sternness of rigid justice, fail to go further and follow the tenderness and gentleness manifest in the manner of Moses' death and burial. Lest the people should make a shrine of his grave and come hither to worship, God buried Moses in an unknown grave in the lonely mountains, and no man knew the place of his burial.

BURIAL OF MOSES.

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale of the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
But no man dug that sepulcher,
And no man saw it e'er;
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

"That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling
Or saw the train go forth.
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes, when the night is done,
Or the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Fades in the setting sun.

"Noiselessly as the springtime
Her spell of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their countless leaves;

So, without sound of music,
Or voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown,
That great procession swept.

"And had he not high honor?
The hillside for his pall,
To be in state while angels wait,
With stars for tapers tall,
The dark rock-pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land
To lay him in the grave.

"O lonely tomb in Moab's land!
O dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still:
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell,
He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
Of him He loved so well."

—*Cecil Frances Alexander.*

## QUESTIONS.

Describe the environs of Mt. Sinai.

Under what conditions were the Ten Commandments given? Name them.

Who made the golden calf, and why?

Concerning the tabernacle, tell of (1) its pattern, (2) its materials, (3) its history.

Give the essential points in the incident of the spies and the turning back from Canaan.

Indicate some of the happenings of the 38 years' wandering.

Where were the farewell addresses of Moses delivered? Where are they recorded?

Give the life of Moses in outline.

Tell of the death and burial of Moses.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER VI.

## THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

Scripture Record—The Book of Joshua.

Selections for Reading and Study—Joshua 1, 6–10, 22–24.

Time—From Death of Moses to Death of Joshua, 1459 to 1434 B.C.

ENTERING CANAAN (Joshua 1–5).

The Promised Land.
God's Charge to Joshua.
Spies Sent.
The faith of Israel Challenged.
The Passover Observed.
The Manna Ceased.

THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO (Joshua 6).

Joshua Directed Concerning Jericho.
Jericho Compassed by Israel.
Jehovah Overthrows Jericho.
Rahab and Her Family Spared.
Curse upon the Rebuilder of Jericho.

THE TAKING OF AI (Joshua 7, 8).

Defeat Before Ai.
Achan is Stoned.
Ai is Captured.

A JOURNEY TO SHECHEM (Joshua 8).

The Law is Ratified.
Joseph's Bones are Buried.

THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND (Joshua 9–22).

The Stratagem of the Gibeonites.
Joshua's Southern Campaign.
Joshua's Northern Campaign.
Allotment of the Land.

JOSHUA'S FAREWELL (Joshua 23, 24).

Joshua's Life in Outline.

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

THE period which we are now to study is, in

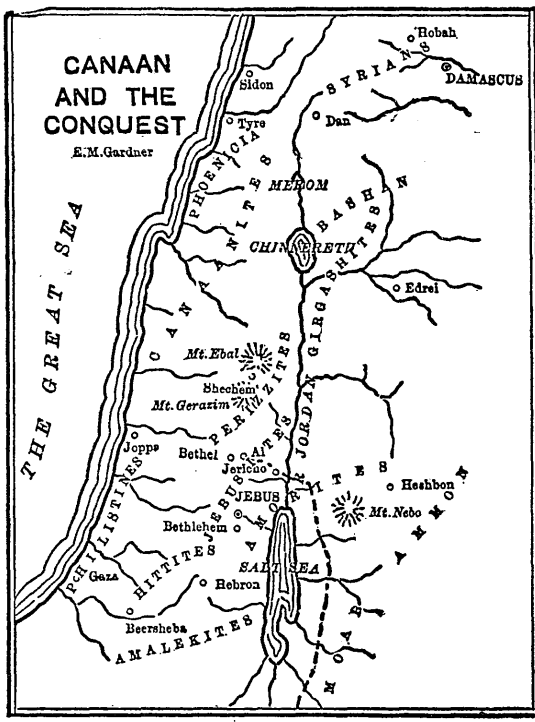
THE period which we are now to study is, in

point of time, the shortest of the periods of Old ten years, though it ranks high in importance and in thrilling interest.

### ENTERING CANAAN.

*The Promised Land.*—Hundreds of years before, God had called Abraham from Chaldea, and, showing him the land of Canaan, had promised the land to him and his descendants. Through the ages this promise had been cherished and this land had been regarded with sacred reverence. When Abraham would send his servant back to Mesopotamia for a wife for Isaac, his chief concern was that his son should in no wise leave Canaan; when Jacob was departing from Laban in Haran, he turned his face steadfastly back to the land of his birth, in spite of the fact that his outraged brother had his home in that vicinity; when Jacob faced death, he made his sons swear that they would bury him in the land of his fathers; when Joseph was nearing the end of his earthly career, he caused the elders of Israel to swear that when God should lead the people out

to the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they would carry with them his embalmed body; so deeply had this thought of the promised possession taken root in the heart of the chosen nation,




when they left Egypt, they seem never to have wavered in their desire and determination to reach the "land of promise."

After forty years of wandering and of discipline, the people were on the borders of this land, long promised and deeply loved.

*God's Charge to Joshua.*—For thirty days the people mourned the death of Moses. With what deep and sincere lamentation they must have regarded the removal of the man who had borne them as a nursing father and had moulded them from a race of slaves into an organized nation.

To Joshua, now called to leadership, the Lord spoke in strong and comforting words, laying special emphasis on two things: (1) He is to be strong and of a good courage, and (2) he is to observe to do according to all the law. "Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night: that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest" (Joshua 1: 7–9).

*Spies Sent.*—Joshua takes the precaution to send two young men across the Jordan to bring back report of the land, and of the attitude of the inhabitants toward the invading hosts of Israel. These brave young men return with the information that the hearts of the people of the

land have melted with fear: "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us" (Joshua 2: 24).

*The Faith of Israel Challenged.*—The divine call to enter Canaan involved a three-fold challenge to the faith of Joshua and of Israel.

(1) The Jordan was now at its flood, more than a half mile wide. Humanly speaking, it was all but impossible with the facilities then at hand to transport a vast host with women and children and flocks and herds across that swollen river.

(2) They were to carry directly into the hostile land their families and their possessions. Military prudence would have suggested that the armed warriors alone should cross the river.

(3) The very fact that these invaders should boldly cross the Jordan for the avowed purpose of conquest would serve notice on the inhabitants of the land that they must stand for their lives. They well knew that no quarter would be asked, and none shown.

The ready response of Joshua and of all Israel to this three-fold challenge stands among the noblest of all exhibitions of faith. "And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." And on the morrow the Lord indeed did wonders for his people. When the waters of the Red Sea parted, God used a strong east wind. This use of natural means has led some to question whether any supernatural element was present. Now at

the Jordan there is not even wind; God parts the waters, and the wondering hosts of Israel march dry-shod into the promised land.

*The Passover Observed.*—Joshua had been especially admonished to observe to do according to all the law. For some reason Moses had suffered the people to neglect the Passover and many other requirements of the law. John Calvin was the first to suggest that, as a disobedient and rejected people, they were not permitted in the wilderness to observe the special ceremonies which marked them as God's chosen nation. Now that the old rebellious race is dead and a new generation has arisen, among whom Jehovah is to dwell and show forth his wonders, it is meet that the law in all of its requirements shall be obeyed. "And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho" (Joshua 5: 10).

*The Manna Ceased.*—"And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year" (Joshua 5: 12).

The times of the Exodus and the Conquest, as we have already noted, were marked by an abundance of miracles. Before the Exodus, while we have much of the supernatural, as in the flood, the birth of Isaac and others, the turning of Lot's wife to a pillar of salt, we have scarcely any miracles or signs given expressly to attest a messen-

ger or to vindicate the divine presence. A study of Old Testament miracles will show that during the days of Moses and Joshua there is more of the miraculous than in any other period of Old Testament history. The reason for this is not far to seek. God is calling out a people and establishing them in a land of his own choosing, that, through this people, he may reveal himself to the world and that, from among this people, he may manifest his own Son in the flesh. Surely it is but natural that in this crucial time which was to tell on all later times, God should give special and bountiful evidence of his divine power and presence.

## The Capture of Jericho.

*Joshua Directed Concerning Jericho.*—The people of Israel are now encamped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho. A few miles away, and commanding the mountain passes which lead up into the land, is the walled city of Jericho. The rulers of this city have closed the gates and prepared to make defense against the invading foe. Having risen early in the morning, Joshua is praying "over against Jericho," and while thus engaged in prayer God appears to him with words of comfort and gives him direction concerning the campaign against Jericho. The first victory in the new land is to be wrought by God's own power without a blow on the part of Israel; God will add one more signal evidence of his choice of the children of Israel and of his purpose to bless them.

*Jericho Compassed by Israel.*—The plan of campaign for the destruction of Jericho, as announced to Joshua, was the strangest ever devised for the destruction of a fortified city. Once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day the whole multitude of Israel, preceded by the Ark of the Covenant, was to march in silence around the walls of the city. "And it came to pass at the seventh time when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city."

*Jehovah Overthrows Jericho.**—"And it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city" (Joshua 6: 20).

*Rahab and Her Family Spared.*—When the young men, sent by Joshua to spy out the land, were in dire peril, Rahab with rare faith and

* Awhile ago the writer heard on an ocean vessel an attack on the miracles of Scripture by a resident of Jerusalem, in the course of which the speaker declared that no wall had been found in the vicinity of modern Jericho, and that the wall which "fell down flat" was no more than a fragile structure of mud or clay, which, of course, tumbled down when the people shouted and the trumpets sounded. During the absence of this same man from Palestine, the German Exploration Society had unearthed near the modern Jericho a wall of immense stones, and when our party visited the Plains of Jericho we were permitted to see the wall whose huge stones were probably hurled down by Jehovah in the presence of Joshua and his hosts. And this is only one of almost numberless instances in which the spade has opened up corroborative evidence of the truthfulness of Holy Scripture.

ready tact saved their lives, at the same time exacting a promise that when the city should be overthrown, she and her family would be spared. The sign agreed upon was that a scarlet cord should be hung from the window of her home, which was situated on the wall of the city. True to the oath which they took in the hour of peril, the young men sought out Rahab and spared her with her family and possessions. It is significant that this heathen woman of questionable character should exercise such clear faith, and it is worthy of note that her name appears in the lineage of the Lord Jesus. (Matthew 1 : 5.)

*Curse upon the Rebuilder of Jericho.*—Because the sins of Jericho were especially grievous, the doom which fell upon the city was peculiarly severe. The moral status of its inhabitants may be seen in the fact that the best individual in the city was a woman who drove a shameful trade. Because of its deep pollution, and as serving to overawe the inhabitants of the land, Jericho was utterly destroyed, its people being put to the sword and its wealth burned with fire. As a perpetual memorial of the divine wrath against the sins of Jericho, and possibly to prevent Jericho from becoming the capital of the nation, Joshua pronounced a solemn curse upon the man who should rebuild the city. Through the ages the site of the city remained a desolate heap, until 400 years later Hiel, a citizen of Bethel, went down and rebuilt the city. The curse of Joshua had literal fulfillment in that this man "laid the

foundations in the death of his first-born and set up the gates in the death of his youngest son" (1 Kings 16: 34).

## The Taking of Ai.

*Defeat Before Ai.*—The inspiration of the Scriptures and the nobility of its writers find emphasis in the frankness and fullness with which they record defeat and failure. In the midst of this glorious record of faith and achievement, we come upon a chapter which tells of sin and reverse. "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel" (Joshua 7: 1).

Joshua and all Israel, unaware of this sin, and possibly over-confident by reason of the signal overthrow of Jericho, sent a small force of 3,000 men against Ai. These men were driven before the men of Ai and chased down the mountain sides, thirty-six of their number being slain. "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord until eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads" (Joshua 7: 6).

*Achan is Stoned.*—There are times when action, rather than prayer, is demanded. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore

liest thou thus upon thy face?" It was made clear that because Israel had sinned the people could not stand before their enemies. When the tribes were brought before the Lord, the tribe of Judah was taken, then the family of the Zarhites; of this family the house of Zabdi was taken; from this household Achan was taken, and thus the guilty man was found. "And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it" (Joshua 7: 20, 21). Because the sin was inexcusably grievous, involving in its consequences all Israel, the punishment was severe. "And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire, after they had stoned them with stones" (Joshua 7: 25).

*Ai is Captured.*—When the sin which brought failure was thus put aside, Joshua assembled the armed force of Israel and led against Ai. Resorting to strategy, he succeeded in subduing and destroying the city.

This incident of the capture of Ai may be summed up in four significant words, *sin, defeat, cleansing, victory.*

## A Journey to Shechem.

*The Law is Ratified.*—Joshua having struck terror to the inhabitants of Canaan by the crossing of the Jordan and the decisive campaigns against Jericho and Ai, now boldly marches, apparently with all Israel, direct to the center of the land to worship Jehovah in a great national convocation. At Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, he builds an altar and, in the midst of the surrounding people on whom a terror from the Lord has fallen, he offers sacrifices to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Moses (Deuteronomy 27) had given specific command concerning this significant occasion, and Joshua carries out to the letter the directions of Moses. It is a memorable scene, with one-half of the tribes on the slopes of Ebal and one-half on Gerizim; those on Mt. Ebal proclaiming the curses, and those of Mt. Gerizim chanting the blessings. Thus, in solemn and august assemblage, Israel heard and ratified the covenant which bound them to be forever a people holy unto Jehovah.

*Joseph's Bones are Buried.*—During all the wilderness wanderings the chosen people had carried with them the bones of Joseph, according to the oath which he exacted of the elders that when they should go out of Egypt they would carry his body with them. A short distance out on the plain from Mt. Ebal was the plot of ground which Jacob had bought for a possession

To this possession of Jacob the hosts of Israel now wended their way and here they buried the bones of Joseph.

## The Conquest of the Land.

Like the intrepid soldier and skillful general, Joshua, having broken into the center of the land and divided his foes, deals first with the people of the southern section and then with the people of the northern part. But before we follow him in these victorious campaigns, we pause to consider an incident in which, because of presumption, Joshua and the elders of Israel appear in no enviable light.

*The Stratagem of the Gibeonites.*—Just over the hills a few miles away from the camps of Israel was the city of Gibeon. Its people had heard of the glory and achievements of Israel, and learning that Joshua was commissioned to destroy utterly the inhabitants of the land, they resolve to save themselves by strategy. "And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We are come from

a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us" (Joshua 9: 3–6). Taken unawares and failing to inquire of God, Joshua and the elders of Israel entered into a league with these Gibeonites and covenanted to be their allies. When presently they discovered the deception, in view of their oath, they spared the Gibeonites, though as a penalty for their treachery they reduced them to servitude.

*Joshua's Southern Campaign.*—On learning of the defection to Israel of the Gibeonites, their former confederates assembled for an attack upon the city of Gibeon. Learning of the peril of his new allies, Joshua led the armies of Israel against his foes. "So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour. And the Lord said unto Joshua, Fear them not: for I have delivered them into thine hand; there shall not a man of them stand before thee" (Joshua 10: 7, 8). It was during this famous battle of Beth-horon that "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." Thus were the armies of Israel victorious in all the southern section of the land.

*Joshua's Northern Campaign.*—When the kings and chiefs farther north learned of these conquests of Joshua in the south, they gathered their forces and resolved to fight for their lives. "And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel. And the Lord

said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them: for tomorrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire" (Joshua 11: 5, 6). Falling upon them by night, Joshua utterly routed these allied kings, and was thus in virtual possession of the whole land. While much was accomplished in these two campaigns, south and north, it was only after a conflict lasting for seven years that the land was subdued, and even then there were strongholds and some large sections which remained in the hands of the original inhabitants.

*Allotment of the Land.*—When the land was in some measure subdued, Joshua assembled the hosts of Israel before the ark in Shiloh, where lots were cast before the Lord for a division of the land among the tribes. Joseph, receiving the double portion of the first-born, became through his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, the father of two tribes. The tribe of Levi received no special landed inheritance.

The tribes were located as follows:

East of the Jordan:

Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

West of the Jordan:

In the south, Simeon, Judah, Benjamin, and Dan;

In the center, Ephraim and Manasseh;

In the north, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali.

## Joshua's Farewell.

Joshua, now an old man and nearing the close of an honorable career, wishing to bind Israel anew to God, assembled the people in a mighty convocation at Shechem, the scene of so many memorable and historic events. Here he delivered a farewell address which for patriotic fervor and devout pleading deserves to rank with the addresses of Moses on the plains of Moab. "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods" (Joshua 24: 14–16).

The character and influence of Joshua are reflected in this word which seems to have been added to the book by a later hand: "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that he had done for Israel" (Joshua 24: 31).

## Joshua's Life in Outline.

(1) Captain of the armies of Israel in battle with the Amalekites on the journey to Mt. Sinai. (Exodus 17: 9.)

(2) Minister to Moses, and his companion in the holy mount. (Exodus 32: 17.)

(3) One of the spies who went up through Canaan; along with Caleb brought back a good report. (Numbers 13: 18.)

(4) Succeeded Moses and led over Jordan. (Numbers 27: 18; Joshua 1–3.)

(5) Destroyed Jericho and Ai, and ratified the law at Shechem. (Joshua 6–8.)

(6) Conquered Canaan and allotted the land.

(7) In the presence of a great convocation, delivered a farewell address. (Joshua 24.)

(8) Wrote the book which bears his name.

## QUESTIONS.

Name the chief events in Old Testament history down to the Conquest.

Suggest some incidents which indicate the affection of the chosen people for the land of Canaan.

What was the burden of God's charge to Joshua?

What report did the two spies sent by Joshua bring back?

Show how the faith of Israel was challenged in the command to cross the Jordan.

Tell of the first Passover in Canaan and suggest a reason why the feast was not observed in the desert.

How were the people fed and clothed during the wilderness wandering?

Where did Joshua get instructions concerning the campaign against Jericho?

Describe that campaign.

Why were Rahab and her family spared?

Why was a curse pronounced on the rebuilder of Jericho? Was that curse fulfilled?

Describe the capture of Ai.

Tell of the stoning of Achan.

Why was the journey made to Shechem at this time?

Where were Joseph's bones buried?

What was the strategy of the Gibeonites?

Tell of Joshua's southern campaign.

Describe briefly his northern campaign.

Tell of Joshua's farewell to Israel.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER VII.

## THE JUDGES.

Scripture Record—Judges and Ruth.

Selections for Reading and Study—Judges 1, 4–8, 11, 14–16; Ruth 1–4.

Time—From Death of Joshua to Birth of Samuel, 1434 to 1171 B.C.

### THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

Rulers of the Time.
Religious Conditions.
Age of Personal Exploits.
A Transition Time.
The Book of Judges.

### LEADING JUDGES.

Othniel Defeats the Mesopotamians (Judges 3: 7–11).
Ehud Delivers from Moab (Judges 3: 12–30).
Shamgar Fights the Philistines (Judges 3: 31).
Deborah and Barak Defeat the Canaanites (Judges 4, 5).
Gideon Saves from the Midianites (Judges 6: 1—8: 32).
Jephthah Defeats the Ammonites (Judges 10: 6—12: 7).
Samson Fights the Philistines (Judges 13–16).
Eli, the Priest-Judge (1 Samuel 1–3).
Samuel, the Last of the Judges (1 Samuel 1–7).

### RUTH THE MOABITESS (Ruth 1–4).

# CHAPTER VII.

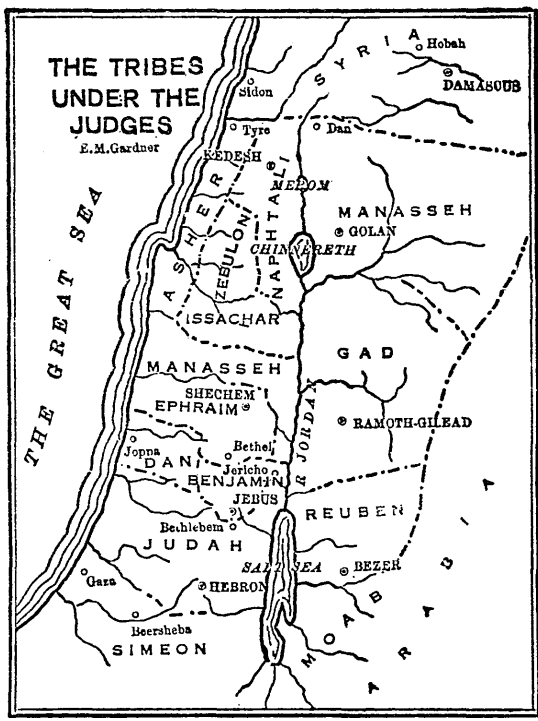
## THE JUDGES.

FOLLOWING the conquest and settlement in Canaan, we come upon a long period of perhaps 350 years which, from the rulers of the time, we call the period of the Judges. Because there were no hereditary rulers and no central stable government, it is difficult to describe this period.

### THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

*Rulers of the Time.*—The phrase "Judges" does not adequately describe the rulers. They were rather military chieftains, men of prowess and leadership, who in some crisis threw off the yoke of foreign oppression and by general consent of the people became rulers or Judges. Because God assumed to exercise direct rule over his people, raising up from time to time deliverers of his own choosing, this period has been called *the Theocracy,* which means God-ruled, and signifies a government in which God exercised direct control. In reality, the later days of the monarchy were designed to be no less a theocracy, inasmuch as even the kings were expected to rule not in their own right or according to their own will, but in God's stead and as God's representatives.

*Religious Conditions.*—During this time both religion and civilization were at low ebb, and hence the period has come to be known as the Dark Ages of Israel's history. There were no




great revivals of religion; the law and the sacred feasts were sadly neglected; no books of Scripture were produced and scarcely any miracles were wrought. Israel was again and again defeated and sorely oppressed by her enemies. The tabernacle with the sacred ark located at Shiloh

constituted a central rallying point, but religion was for the most part at low ebb.

The writer of the book of Judges carries a kind of oft-recurring formula, describing conditions which found frequent repetition, as follows: (1) The children of Israel fall into sin and idolatry, (2) God gives them into the hands of their enemies to be oppressed, (3) they cry unto the Lord, (4) the Lord raises up a deliverer to throw off the hated yoke. The history is evidently written from the religious viewpoint and is designed to teach successive generations that "righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people."

The frequent religious lapses came from the corrupting influences of the native peoples with whom the Israelites mingled and intermarried. The commission to Joshua was to destroy utterly the inhabitants of the land for the evident reason that if any remained they would be a corrupting influence among the chosen people. Joshua failed to execute this commission and left in the land considerable numbers of the original population. These were for hundreds of years a snare to Israel, until David finally destroyed the Philistine power and uprooted the Canaanites.

*Age of Personal Exploits.*—During the time of the Judges there were no kings or other hereditary rulers; there was no standing army, as there was no stable government. In the time of the Exodus and the Conquest the twelve tribes were held together by the very conditions under which they

lived and by the strong influence of Moses and Joshua. Now that they are settled in Canaan, each tribe governed itself, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

The rude times and the prevailing methods of warfare called for physical prowess and personal heroism. By valiant exploits and deeds of daring some man would gain the attention and confidence of the people and would come to be recognized and accepted as Judge, usually over a few tribes or a certain section of the land. Gideon and Samuel were the only Judges who ruled over all the twelve tribes.

*A Transition Time.*—During this long period the soil of the national life was lying fallow and the way was preparing for the great days to follow. This period lies as a valley between the mountain-peak epochs which precede and follow, the Conquest and the Kingdom. Immediately before, come the wonderful days of Moses and Joshua, while the glorious days of David and Solomon come after, thus enclosing this period in which Israel appears to be marking time and making little headway.

*The Book of Judges.*—It has been customary to attribute this book to Samuel. There are touches which indicate contemporary authorship and it seems probable that records were made or that traditions were carefully preserved, which were later, possibly by the hand of Samuel, put together in permanent form in a way to impress certain great truths. "The Book of Judges,

therefore, is not simply a record of historical events, but a record *plus* an interpretation."

The book falls into three well-defined divisions: (1) An introduction setting forth conditions in Palestine at the beginning of this period (chapters 1, 2). (2) The main body of the book, describing the Judges (chapters 3–16). (3) Concluding chapters relating the migration of the Danites and the war with Benjamin (chapters 17–21). This book sets forth the careers of all of the Judges except Eli and Samuel, whose lives are recorded in 1 Samuel 1–12.

## The Leading Judges.

While the names of fifteen Judges are preserved to us, only a few of these have extended mention.

*Othniel Defeats the Mesopotamians.*—During the war of the Conquest, Othniel, the younger brother, or possibly the nephew, of Caleb, had signalized himself by extraordinary valor in taking the city of Debir, and for this daring exploit was given the hand of Achsah, daughter of Caleb, in marriage. When Joshua was dead and the people had drifted into idolatry, invading hosts from far-away Mesopotamia oppressed Israel for eight years. Othniel rallied his discouraged people, defeated and drove out the invaders, after which the land had rest for a period of eighty years.

*Ehud Delivers from Moab.*—At length the children of Israel drifted again into idolatry, and as

a punishment Jehovah permitted the Moabites on the east and southeast to oppress them. The king of Moab had established his capital in the valley of the Jordan. When Ehud went down to bear the annual tribute of Israel to Eglon, he obtained a secret conference with the king, and drawing a dagger from his flowing garments he plunged it into the body of the king. Rushing up the steep cliffs back of Gilgal, he called the men of Israel to war and defeated Moab, thus bringing to the land another period of rest which is said to have lasted eighty years.

*Shamgar Fights the Philistines.*—When the Philistines, Israel's inveterate foes, made a sudden foray, they found Shamgar plowing in the field. Having no other weapon at hand, he took the stout ox-goad which he carried and with it slew 600 men of the Philistines. By reason of this deliverance he became a Judge in Israel.

*Deborah and Barak Defeat the Canaanites.*—Deborah, with whom we associate the name of Barak, who at her instigation led the armies of Israel against the Canaanites, was the only woman who judged Israel. She is worthy to be reckoned as one of the greatest and most influential of the Judges, being more a prophetess, a spokesman for God, than a Judge. Having her home under a well-known palm-tree in the hills of Ephraim, she received the people from every part of the land as they came to inquire of the Lord and to be instructed in his ways.

When Israel had long groaned beneath the oppression of Jabin, king of the Canaanites, Deborah roused Barak to throw off the hated yoke. So disheartened was Barak, he would consent to go out to battle only on condition that Deborah would go with him. In the plain of Esdraelon the battle was fought and Israel, aided by a heavy storm which was regarded as a special divine interposition, won a signal victory, breaking the power of the Canaanites and giving the land a forty years' rest.

*Gideon Saves from the Midianites.*—Gideon, also known as Jerubbaal, ranks among the most picturesque and interesting of all the Judges. Our first introduction to him reveals a full-orbed man and indicates that he had already wrought deeds of valor.

(1) *The Call of Gideon.* For seven years the Midianites had come from beyond the Jordan in such numbers that they were likened to locusts, and had utterly devastated the land, driving the handful of people back into the mountain fastnesses. Hidden away among the hills of Manasseh, Gideon was threshing wheat with a flail, when the angel of Jehovah suddenly appeared, saying: "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valor." In the midst of his lowly tasks the salutation might almost appear to be irony, but presently the Lord commissioned him to deliver Israel: "Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites." In order to further reassure Gideon and prepare

him for the heroic service to which he was called, a special sign was vouchsafed to him. He brought an offering to the Lord, a kid and some unleavened cakes. These the angel touched with his staff and a fire rose out of the rock and consumed them.

Thus commissioned and encouraged, Gideon did not delay to enter upon his new duties. His first move was to destroy the idolatry which had crept into his father's home. He threw down the altar of Baal and slew the bullock which was reserved for sacrifice to that god. When it was discovered that Gideon had done this, Joash his father saved his life by the reasonable challenge, "Let Baal plead;" that is, if Baal is really a god, let him vindicate himself.

(2) *Defeats the Midianites.* The opportunity soon arose for Gideon to fulfill the high mission to which he was called, the Midianites having encamped in great numbers in the plains of Esdraelon and spread terror throughout Israel. "Clothed" with the spirit of God, Gideon sounded a trumpet and through messengers summoned the men of Israel to assemble against the invaders. The fact that only 32,000 men rallied to Gideon at Mt. Gilead indicates the straits to which Israel was reduced.

But God would reserve to himself the glory of this victory, and hence he would reduce this force, lest the warriors of Israel vaunt themselves and declare that by their own might they have vanquished their foes. Two methods were used to

reduce the numbers. According to the usual custom, opportunity was given for all who were faint of heart to return to their homes. The fact that 22,000 availed themselves of this privilege and confessed themselves afraid, shows at once the discouragement of Israel and the strength of the invading host. But the number was yet too large. Gideon was commanded to lead the remaining 10,000 across the spring Harod. Of this number 300 lifted the water to their mouths in their hands, "lapped like dogs," thus evincing their eagerness for battle and their indifference to their own comfort. This company of 300 God was to use, and through them vengeance was to be wreaked upon the enemies of God's people.

The plan of campaign was admirably designed to throw into panic and confusion such an irregular and loosely organized multitude as was scattered over the valley. In three companies of 100 each, Gideon's band surrounds the enemy on three sides in the darkness of the night. Each man has a lamp concealed in a pitcher. At a given signal the pitchers are broken and three hundred lights gleam forth, while at the same time the men raise a mighty shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." Thus awakened in the night, surrounded by lines of flashing lights and startled by the shout of Gideon's men, the undisciplined hordes fly in terror and fall by thousands at the hands of the men of Israel.

(3) *Refuses to be King.* In token of their gratitude to Gideon for this signal overthrow of their

national foes, the leaders of the people assemble and ask Gideon to become their king. This appears to be the first trace of that desire for a king and a royal court which later, in Samuel's day, resulted in the setting up of a monarchy and the making of Saul king in Israel. But Gideon magnanimously puts away the proffered honor: "I will not rule over you: the Lord shall rule over you." While Gideon declined to be the actual king, he yet ruled with royal pomp, setting up his numerous sons to rule over various cities. As in the case of Saul and some other Old Testament heroes, Gideon hardly sustained in maturer and declining years the zeal for Jehovah which marked his opening career.

*Abimelech,* the son of Gideon, called the "Bramble King," from the significant parable of Jotham, having slain all of his brothers save Jotham, ruled Israel three years, maintaining the semblance of a court in Shechem.

After Abimelech arose *Tola,* who judged Israel 23 years, while after him came *Jair,* who with his sons ruled 22 years.

*Jephthah Defeats the Ammonites.*—Jephthah, a rough freebooter in the mountains east of the Jordan, was besought by the Hebrews to become their leader against the people of Ammon, who had crossed the Jordan and were oppressing the people. Jephthah acceded to their plea on condition that if victory resulted he should rule over them. Before going to battle he ap-

pealed to the men of Ammon in a spirit of justice to retire from the lands of Israel. When this plea proved unavailing, he made a vow to Jehovah that, if he would give him victory, whatsoever came first out of his house to greet him on his return should be offered in sacrifice.

Returning, flushed with victory, he was first greeted by his only daughter. "And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me; for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I can not go back" (Judges 11: 35).

In Leviticus 27: 1–8, we find instructions for redeeming such as had been consecrated by a vow, but there can be little reason to suppose that Jephthah knew of such provision. We need make no apology for such men as Jephthah and Samson and other similar characters among the Judges. It is sufficient to say that they were children of the rude times in which they lived. The work to which they were called was rough work which required rugged men. Jehovah condescended to the times and used the instruments which yielded themselves for his purposes.

After Jephthah three Judges, *Ibzan, Elon* and *Abdon,* are mentioned, though we have no detailed account of any one of them.

*Samson Fights the Philistines.*—A physical giant, but a moral weakling, Samson the last of the Judges to be thus officially designated, is a strange and contradictory character. Raised up in the days when the Philistines oppressed the Israelites, he was endowed with superhuman strength, and by feats of physical prowess wrought deliverance for his people. "His tearing a young lion to pieces; his killing thirty men of Ashkelon; his catching three hundred foxes, and setting fire to the corn of the Philistines; his slaying a thousand men at En-hakkore with the jawbone of an ass; his carrying the gates of Gaza up to a hill near Hebron; and after he had been treacherously taken and his eyes put out, his destruction both of himself and of the lords of the Philistines by pulling down the pillars that supported the house, were the greatest feats of bodily strength ever known" (Blaikie).

*Eli, the Priest-Judge.*—Eli, who appears to have been a contemporary of Samson, was high priest and in this capacity, rather than as warrior or deliverer, he came to be the leader and ruler of the Hebrews. A pious and patriotic man, his chief fault lay in such weak indulgence of his sons as resulted in their becoming profligates. After a battle between the Hebrews and their ancient enemies, the Philistines, on reception of the news that his sons, Hophni and Phineas, were slain and that the ark of the Lord was taken, Eli, an

old man and blind, fell over backward and his neck was broken.

*Samuel, the Last of the Judges.*—Samuel contributed much by his character and his statesmanship to the glories of the period which followed. He will receive further notice in the next chapter as he is closely associated for many years with Saul and David, the first kings of Israel.

## Ruth, the Moabitess.

The beautiful story of Ruth falls "in the days when the Judges ruled." A severe drought drove Elimelech and Naomi with their two sons from their home in Bethlehem across the Jordan to the land of Moab. Here their sons, Mahlon and Chilion, married Ruth and Orpah, women of Moab. Elimelech and the two sons sickened and died, leaving the women in widowhood. Naomi turned in her loneliness to her native land and doubtless in her sorrow her heart turned anew toward Jehovah. Kissing her daughters-in-law, she bade them return to their homes and the houses of their fathers. Orpah lifted up her voice and wept, but returned again to her people. Ruth, who seems to have been converted to the religion of the true God, said to Naomi: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1: 16).

Coming to Bethlehem, Ruth goes to glean in the harvest field of Boaz and is later married to that worthy citizen. Boaz and Ruth, as the grandparents of Jesse, the father of David, stand in the line of our Lord's ancestry.

## QUESTIONS.

What length of time is covered by the period of the Judges?

Describe the rulers of the time.

What as to the religious conditions?

Why was this a time of personal exploits?

What as to the authorship and nature of the Book of Judges?

How many judges were there?

From what people did Othniel deliver?

Tell of Ehud's deliverance from the Moabites.

What feat distinguished Shamgar?

Tell of the deliverance under Deborah and Barak.

Give in outline the chief events in the life of Gideon.

Tell of Jephthah's campaign against the Ammonites.

Recount some of the adventures of Samson.

Tell something of Eli.

Give the essential features of the story of Ruth.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER VIII.

## THE RISE OF THE KINGDOM: SAMUEL AND SAUL.

Scripture Record—1 Samuel, chapters 1–31.

Selections for Reading and Study—1 Samuel 1–3, 10–15, 31.

Time—From the Birth of Samuel to Death of Saul, 1171 to 1063 B.C.

### SAMUEL, THE LAST OF THE JUDGES (1 Samuel 1–7).

The Birth of Samuel.

Deliverance through Prayer.

Schools of the Prophets.

Israel Desires a King—
(1) Samuel's Sons had Failed.
(2) The Nations round about Threatened Israel.
(3) National Pride.

The Judgeship of Samuel.

Leading Facts Concerning Samuel.

### SAUL, THE FIRST KING OF ISRAEL (1 Samuel 8–14).

Early Military Achievements—
(1) Against the Ammonites.
(2) Against the Philistines.
(3) Against the Amalekites.

Later Period of Rebellion and Decline.

Saul's Last Battle.

The Nature of the Kingdom.

The Failure of Saul.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## THE RISE OF THE KINGDOM: SAMUEL AND SAUL.

### SAMUEL, THE LAST OF THE JUDGES.

SAMUEL stands in the twilight between the dark days of the Judges and the brighter days of the kingdom. Abraham founded the Hebrew race; Joseph delivered the race from famine; Moses moulded the race into a nation with a system of laws and religion; Joshua gave the race a home; it now remained for Samuel to organize a kingly government and usher in the golden era of Israel's history. By reason of his own personal character and because of the unique place he occupies in the history of the chosen people, Samuel looms large on the horizon, taking rank with Abraham, Moses, and David among the pre-eminent men of Old Testament times.

*The Birth of Samuel.*—The name of Samuel, "asked of Jehovah," reminds us of the beautiful story of his birth and childhood. Receiving the child as a gift desired of God, his mother Hannah gave him to God. Bringing him to the tabernacle in Shiloh, and pouring forth her joyful praise in a hymn of exceptional beauty, she presented the child to the Lord and left him with the aged Eli to grow up in the service, and even

in the sacred precincts, of the house of God. Because of the wickedness of those days, God granted "no open vision," but to the child Samuel God spoke in audible voice, establishing thus early an intimate relationship with his servant and denouncing through him the doom which should shortly fall on the house of Eli for the sins of his wicked sons.

*Deliverance through Prayer.*—Samuel does not appear again on the scene until after many years, when the Hebrews have come upon a sad crisis in their history. They have gone away from Jehovah into the grossest idolatry, and in consequence have been delivered for chastisement into the hands of their ancient enemies, the Philistines. In this dark hour Samuel came forward, assembled all Israel at Mizpah, and exhorted them to turn from their idolatries to the God of their fathers. While the people were thus gathered for worship, the Philistines, doubtless supposing that they had gathered for war, drew near and threatened to give battle. Samuel betook himself to prayer, and in response to the cry of his servant God sent a terrible thunder-storm, and the Philistines, seized with panic, fled before the pursuing Israelites. "Othniel delivered the people by his spear, Ehud by his dagger, Shamgar by his ox-goad, Gideon by his sword, and Samson by the jawbone of an ass; but Samuel's weapon was prayer."

*Schools of the Prophets.*—While Samuel is best known as the founder of the kingdom and the

maker of kings, he rendered also a far-reaching service as a prophet and as the founder of the schools of prophecy. At Gilgal, at Bethel, at Mizpah, and at Ramah, he established schools where instruction was given to groups of young prophets. We cannot make out clearly the nature of these schools, though it seems probable that they made contribution to the quickened spiritual life and the enlarged intelligence which marked the days of Samuel and David.

There had been prophets before Samuel, but it remained for Samuel to give a mighty impetus to prophecy by organizing these schools for young men. From this time prophecy and the prophets hold a distinct and important place in the national life.

*Israel Desires a King.*—Since the days of Joshua the tribes had lived a pastoral and agricultural life. The law of Moses and the annual assemblages before the tabernacle at Shiloh had served to hold the people together, but there had been no national bond and no strong central government. The revival and the enlargement of national consciousness which came under the wise reign of Samuel naturally led the people to wish for a stable government with a larger measure of national unity. This desire led to the request of Samuel that he should give them a king. This desire for a king is not difficult to account for in the light of the following facts:

(1) *Samuel's sons had failed.* The thinking of the people in favor of a kingdom was doubtless

crystalized by the signal failure of the sons of Samuel, who would in the natural course of events be expected to succeed the great leader. These sons, Joel and Abiah, had been entrusted with some responsibility of government in the southern part of the land, but by licentiousness and bribe-taking had proved themselves utterly unworthy of high responsibility (1 Samuel 8: 3). "He who, when a child, had denounced the terrible doom on Eli for the wickedness of his sons, lived to see his own sons turning aside after lucre, exacting excessive usury, and perverting judgment."

(2) *The nations round about threatened Israel.* Another circumstance which contributed to the desire for a strong central government was the rise of threatening powers on various sides which caused alarm among the Hebrews. The Philistines on the southwest and the Ammonites on the east, ambitious and aggressive people, had made incursions into the land and threatened further depredations. The waning of Samuel's power, with the prospect of revolution and possible anarchy under his sons, warned the leaders of the Hebrews that in order to maintain themselves against the growing power of their enemies, they must have a strong government headed by a leader of recognized authority.

(3) *National pride.* When the elders came to Samuel with their request for a king they desired that a king might rule over them "like the nations round about" (1 Samuel 8: 5). They

were moved by the desire to be like their heathen neighbors; they would have a king with all of a king's pomp and glory; they would have a royal court, a standing army, and would take their place among the nations of the world. Had not Moses, anticipating the time when they should have a king, left instructions according to which the king should rule, a kind of constitution for the kingdom? (Deuteronomy 17: 14–20.)

The folly and sin of the people in desiring a king to rule over them lay in the spirit of pride and the forgetfulness of Jehovah which marked their request. Samuel, grieved for the request and knowing well the perils which lay along the path which the people had chosen for themselves, hastened to lay the whole matter before God. He received instruction to make solemn protest and to utter solemn warning concerning the king, who should reign over them, and the manner of his rule, but he was directed to accede to the request of the people and anoint a king to rule over them.

*The Judgeship of Samuel.*—Samuel and Gideon were the only judges who ruled over all the twelve tribes of Israel. By his wise and strong administration of the affairs of government, Samuel cemented the bonds which bound the people together and inaugurated an era of peace and great prosperity. He was the greatest of the judges and ranks among the noblest of Israel's mighty men.

Samuel's farewell to the men of Israel, like the farewell of Moses and like that of Joshua, is full

of noble and inspiring sentiment: "Here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken aught of any man's hand" (1 Samuel 12: 3, 4).

### Leading Facts Concerning Samuel.

(1) The child Samuel was given in answer to prayer.

(2) Hannah, the mother of Samuel, is generally regarded as a model mother.

(3) Samuel was preëminent in intercessory prayer.

(4) Samuel anointed Saul king over Israel.

(5) Samuel anointed David to rule in the place of Saul.

(6) In any list of the great Old Testament characters Samuel must have a place. If the list were limited to four, perhaps these would be usually named: Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David.

### Saul, the First King of Israel.

There is not in all history a finer picture of self-effacing patriotism and ready obedience to the divine will than that which is seen when the aged Samuel renounced the leadership of the nation and anointed the youthful Saul to reign in his

stead. Likewise, Saul, in those early days, charms us with his modesty and his bravery. After Samuel had crowned him and given him high visions of the career opening to him, Saul returned to his daily toil and gave himself to his usual tasks. Later Samuel assembled all Israel in a mighty convocation at Mizpah, and Saul was proclaimed king.

Saul's reign falls into two somewhat clearly marked periods: (1) An earlier period of brilliant military achievements, and (2) a later period of rebellion and decline.

*Early Military Achievements.*—These were chiefly in wars with the Ammonites on the east, with the Philistines on the west, and with the Amalekites on the south.

(1) *Saul's first conflict was with the Ammonites.* These people in their home across the Jordan had long menaced the peace of Israel. They had now encompassed Jabesh-Gilead, a town of some consequence of the east of the Jordan and had insolently threatened its people with the loss of their right eyes. Securing a week's respite, the men of Jabesh-Gilead sent messengers to Saul and the people of Israel, pleading for relief. Saul, though already anointed king, had yet continued his usual duties. On coming in from the field with his oxen, he found the people of his village weeping in despair for the news which had come from Jabesh-Gilead. With characteristic energy, Saul summoned the warriors of the realm and falling unexpectedly on the Ammonites he cut them

to pieces, delivering his imperiled countrymen and making for himself a place in the hearts of the Hebrew people.

It is interesting to recall that many years afterward, when the bodies of Saul and his sons were hung in disgrace from the walls of Beth-shan, the men of Jabesh-Gilead, in grateful recollection of Saul's deliverance, made a night march and, at the peril of their lives, rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons and gave them decent burial.

(2) *Saul's next campaign was against the Philistines.* Having gathered in considerable numbers, these people came boldly into the very heart of the land. Saul assembled an army and encamped over against the enemy, but while the armies waited, Jonathan, Saul's son, impatient of delay and actuated by high faith, went personally against the enemy. Aided by his armor-bearer, he slew twenty men and struck terror to the hearts of the Philistines, who fled in disorder before the victorious Israelites.

(3) *A third campaign was waged against the Amalekites on the south.* These people had wantonly attacked Israel during their wilderness journey and in consequence Jehovah had announced their ultimate destruction. Saul was chosen to fulfill this prophecy, but, having routed and pursued the Amalekites, instead of utterly destroying them, he foolishly spared the best of the flocks and herds, reserving them for himself and the people. Samuel met his evasions and apologies with stern rebuke, and again announced that the

kingdom should be taken from him and given to another more worthy than himself.

*Later Period of Rebellion and Decline.*—Victorious in these early campaigns, always courageous and energetic, Saul gave promise of a career of the largest usefulness. But there grew within him a strangely willful and perverse spirit. Twice already—in the matter of the sacrifice at Gilgal and in the case of the Amalekites—Saul had manifested a spirit of disobedience, and this root of evil grew rapidly until he came into open defiance toward Jehovah.

Saul's jealously and bitterness toward David, a bitterness which increased in the face of clear indications that the favor of God rested on David, grew until it seemed to become insane madness. With the utmost fury for many years, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, he pursued David and sought to destroy him.

*Saul's Last Battle.*—Israel's ancient enemies, the Philistines, having recovered from the blows which Saul had dealt them in earlier years, gathered their forces and marched up into the very center of Saul's territory. They camped on the slopes of Gilboa, while the armies of Israel waited at Shunem, some miles away across the valley. Depressed with the sense of impending doom, Saul, under cover of night, made his way around Little Hermon to Endor in order to make inquiry of a witch as to the outcome of the battle which must be fought on the morrow. Receiving no word of encouragement, Saul returned to lead

his forces, only to die with his sons in defeat and disgrace.

*The Nature of the Kingdom.*—While Samuel, in response to the demand of the people, and in accordance with the direction of Jehovah, gave the Israelites a king and established for them a kingdom, this king and this kingdom were not to be like those of surrounding nations. God was still to be the supreme ruler, while the kings were to rule in his stead and as his representatives. This was made clear to Saul, and Saul's failure to accept this provision and act upon it was the basis of his rejection by Jehovah, while David's frank recognition of this relationship to Jehovah was chief among the things that made him "a man after God's own heart."

The rights of the king and the rights of the people were carefully defined. Indeed, Moses, foreseeing this emergency, had carefully set forth the manner of the kingdom and the limitations of the king's rule. With statesmanlike wisdom, Samuel "told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord" (1 Samuel 10: 25).

*The Failure of Saul.*—No young man in sacred history started his public career with more of promise, or under more auspicious conditions, than did Saul. The powerful Samuel gave to the young king whom he had anointed the full weight of his influence. Moved by his heroic daring and his kinglike bearing, the people gave him royal support. He was modest and brave and withal

subservient to the will of God. But with the establishment of the kingdom in his hand, Saul developed a strange spirit of rebellion against Jehovah, so that the closing years of his reign are marked by a perverseness and malevolence which seem to justify the conclusion of some Bible students that Saul was insane during these last days.

## QUESTIONS.

Give briefly the chief events in Old Testament history to the time of Samuel.

Tell of Samuel's birth and childhood.

Relate an incident which illustrates Samuel's reliance on prayer.

What is meant by schools of the prophets?

Why did the people desire a king? Wherein was the sin of this desire?

Into what two periods does the reign of Saul fall?

Against what nations did Saul conduct successful warfare?

Tell something of Saul's period of rebellion and decline.

Describe Saul's last battle.

What was the divine purpose concerning the kingdom?

Tell of the failure of Saul.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER IX.

## THE KINGDOM IN ITS GLORY: THE REIGN OF DAVID.

Scripture Record—2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, chapters 11–29.

Selections for Reading and Study—2 Samuel 1–7, 11, 12; 1 Kings 1.

Time—1063 to 1023 B.C.

A Shepherd Lad (1 Samuel 16: 1–13).

At the Court of Saul (1 Samuel 16: 14—20: 42).

A Noble Youth.
David and Goliath.

An Outlaw Chieftain (1 Samuel 21–30).

Hated of Saul.
Among the Philistines.
The Cave of Adullam.
Generosity toward Saul.

King in Hebron (2 Samuel 2–4).

King in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5–24; 2 Chronicles 11–20).

Captured Jerusalem and Made It His Capital.
Conquered His Enemies Round About.
Organized and Developed His Kingdom.
David's Great Sin.
Preparation for the Building of the Temple.
Parting Charge to Solomon.

David and the Psalms.

An Inspiring Career.

# CHAPTER IX.

## THE KINGDOM IN ITS GLORY: THE REIGN OF DAVID.

DAVID is the most attractive and, after Moses, the greatest, character in Old Testament history. Admired and loved in his own day, David has, through all the ages, made singular appeal to the imagination and affection of Bible readers. "Shepherd, soldier, poet, king, the romantic friend, the chivalrous leader, the devoted father, he was eminent alike for his exalted piety and his noble patriotism."

The life of David may be considered in five natural sections: (1) A shepherd lad, (2) at the court of Saul, (3) an outlaw chieftain, (4) king in Hebron, (5) king in Jerusalem.

### A SHEPHERD LAD.

David was the son of Jesse who, in turn, was the grandson of Boaz and Ruth. His native place was Bethlehem, where his great-grandmother, Ruth, gleaned in the fields. The family of Jesse was devout and highly respected in the great tribe of Judah. The youngest of his sons, David kept the family flocks in the neighboring fields, where a thousand years later other "shepherds kept their

flocks by night." Thus engaged, he developed the high courage, the ready resourcefulness, and the clear faith in Jehovah, which marked his after years. When a lion roared among his lambs he went forth and slew the lion and when, on another occasion, a bear threatened his flock, he gave battle and slew the bear. These exploits in which he recognized the help of Jehovah were ever afterward a source of cheer and strength to David.

We have no record of the relation between this Bethlehem family and the great prophet Samuel, who lived at Ramah a few miles to the north. There can be no doubt that in a devout home like that of Jesse, the name and the presence of the prophet were familiar. Certain it is that the old prophet and the youthful David early became fast friends, and that the instructions and influence of Samuel were potent in the developing of that nobility of character which marked all the mature years of David.

### At the Court of Saul.

*A Noble Youth.*—When Saul was given to melancholy, which at times probably amounted to insanity, and when quest was made for a skilled musician to soothe the distracted king, the name of David was mentioned to the king: "Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold-I have seen a son of Jesse, the Beth-lehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters,

and a comely person, and the Lord is with him." (1 Samuel 16: 18.) A fine picture we have here: (1) A master musician, (2) mighty in valor, (3) prudent in matters, (4) a comely person, (5) Jehovah is with him. Brought to the king's court, David behaved himself wisely, and by the charms of his harp and doubtless of his songs, he quieted the troubled spirit of the king. The record does not indicate how long David was thus attached to the court of Saul, though it is probable that he returned after a time to the care of his father's flocks.

*David and Goliath.*—Saul's ancient enemies appear to have recovered from the defeat which he had inflicted upon them early in his reign and they now gather in force and challenge the Hebrews to battle. In accordance with the custom of the day, Goliath, a formidable giant, went forth day after day challenging the armies of Saul to send forth a chosen warrior that they might fight each other and thus decide the issues of battle. The defiance and challenge of the giant struck terror to the hearts of the Hebrews, and no warrior was found in their ranks to go forth in their behalf. At this time David appeared in the camps bringing tidings and gifts for his brothers in the army. In the face of taunts from his brothers and discouragement on the part of Saul, David offers to go forth and fight the giant. His word to the Philistine is an index to the strength and achievements of his whole life: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a

shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17: 45). With his trusted sling he sends a smooth stone previously taken from the brook crashing through the giant's armor and into his forehead.

This victory over Goliath is a marked event in Hebrew history. It led to the defeat and complete rout of the Philistines. It marks the beginning of David's public career. While he had been at Saul's court as musician, he is now called to be Saul's armor-bearer; he wins the undying affection of Jonathan, Saul's son; he becomes son-in-law to the king and captain of his bodyguard; he quickly wins a high place in the esteem and confidence of all Israel.

### An Outlaw Chieftain.

*Hated of Saul.*—On the return from the war against the Philistines in which the issues were decided in favor of Israel by David's defeat of the giant, the Hebrew women chanted the praises of the leaders, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands," and adding in a chorus, "David hath slain his ten thousands." This roused bitter jealousy in the heart of Saul, and from that day Saul hated and feared David and with increasing fury sought to destroy him. At first the king sought to compass David's downfall by commanding Jonathan and the courtiers to slay him. Failing in this, he undertook to kill him with his own hand, and more than once hurled at him the

javelin which he held as a sign of royalty. When these efforts proved unavailing the king sought to destroy David by sending him on dangerous expeditions against the public enemy. In the midst of all these perils David behaved himself wisely, and Jehovah his God delivered him.

*Among the Philistines.*—Convinced at last that Saul's anger could not be abated and realizing that his life was in constant peril, David went out from the court of Saul and became for perhaps a period of ten years an outlaw chieftain, a free-booting frontiersman. Going among the Philistines, he sought shelter among these enemies of his people. Discovered as the conqueror of their giant chieftain, and in consequent danger of summary punishment, he feigned madness and through oriental reverence for insanity made his escape.

*The Cave of Adullam.*—On his escape from the Philistines David took up his abode in the Cave of Adullam, situated in the southern part of the territory of Judah. Here his kinsmen and many men in the realm, oppressed by Saul's tyranny and dissatisfied with his misrule, flocked to his standards, so that he was speedily surrounded by a brave, devoted band.

Saul left the administration of his government and turned all his forces toward the capture of David, hunting him like a partridge on the mountains.

*Generosity toward Saul.*—This period of David's life is full of adventures and hair-breadth

escapes. Two incidents will sufficiently illustrate the nature of these experiences and indicate the spirit of Saul as also that of David.

(1) Saul, while hunting David in the wild fastnesses of Judah, went into a cave for a season of rest. David, who with his men had hidden in the cave, took his sharp sword, and while Saul slept, cut off a part of his skirt. Later David showed the piece of the garment to Saul, declared that he had spared his life, and appealed to him in a spirit of justice to cease his pursuit.

(2) On another occasion Saul was sleeping in the midst of his bodyguard with his cruse nearby and his spear stuck in the ground. David, accompanied by his nephew, made his way among the sleeping group and, taking Saul's cruse and his spear, escaped to the neighboring hills. At a safe distance across a mountain gorge he called to Saul and his bodyguard and, holding up the cruse and the spear, he chided Abner with being lax in his care of the king, and thus again proved his kindness toward Saul.

On both of these occasions Saul, with characteristic impulsiveness, declared his fault in persecuting David, besought his forgiveness, and promised future friendliness. Alas, the spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul and an evil spirit had come to possess him; he but grew in bitterness and persisted in his efforts to destroy the man whom God had declared was better than himself.

## King in Hebron.

The Philistines, having recovered from the defeat inflicted by Israel on the death of Goliath, and taking advantage of Saul's absence from the seat of government in quest of David, assembled an army and, marching up the plains, invaded Saul's territory in the neighborhood of Mt. Gilboa. Learning of this peril, Saul left the pursuit of David and went against his old-time enemy, only to be defeated and slain, along with three of his sons. The Israelites were now in sad plight. The Philistines were overruning the land, the government was breaking down and the people were disorganized and discouraged. Abner, captain of Saul's army, had Ishbosheth, Saul's son, crowned king, and established his capital at Mahanaim on the east of the Jordan. The elders of Judah, the tribe to which David belonged, called him to be their king. Bidden of the Lord, he went up to Hebron with his family and his now famous band of six hundred warriors, and was crowned king over the tribe of Judah.

Between David and the house of Saul there was constant warfare, in which David was usually victorious, so that, to use the expressive language of Scripture, "David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." Abner at length, foreseeing the inevitable result of the conflict and stung by an insult from Ishbosheth, delivered his sword and his army to David.

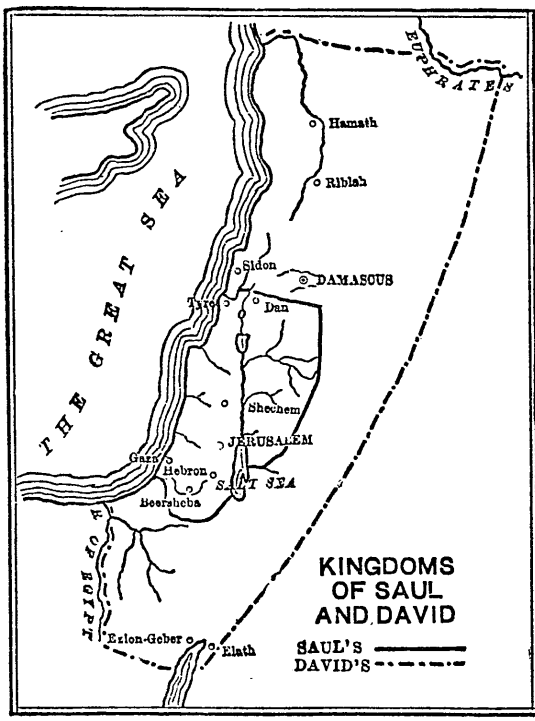
## King in Jerusalem.

Saul's kingdom having thus fallen, the hearts of the men of Israel turned toward David, who had reigned seven and a half years over the tribe of Judah, and, assembling in vast numbers at Hebron, they asked him to become king of the whole nation. The promise of God through Samuel, cherished during weary years of delay, was at last fulfilled and David stood at the age of thirty-seven at the head of the united tribes of Israel.

The outstanding events in David's reign of thirty-seven years in Jerusalem may be summed up as follows:

*Captured Jerusalem and made it his capital.* On the occasion of David's coronation in Hebron as king over all the tribes, a host of warriors, numbering upwards of 300,000, assembled for the festivities. Taking advantage of the presence of this host, he determined to reduce the fortress of Jebus (afterwards called Jerusalem) and transfer his capital to that city. This strong fortification had resisted all attacks, and since the days of Joshua had remained in the hands of the native garrison. Even in the face of David's host they boasted that they could man the walls with the blind and maimed, assured that the fortress was impregnable. They little knew the spirit of the commander and the temper of the men who came against them.

The reduction of this ancient stronghold and its choice as a capital illustrate the far-seeing wisdom and the consummate statesmanship which mark the reign of David. On the border line be-




tween the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, not far from the powerful tribe of Ephraim, a site of rare beauty and of great natural strength, this was the best site for a capital that could have been selected. Hither David brought the ark of the Lord, the tabernacle having probably perished,

and here he established the religious center of Israel. His was to be a theocratic kingdom, and he would associate in closest bonds the religious and political life of the people.

*Conquered his enemies round about.* No sooner was David firmly seated on his throne and established in his new capital, than he set himself to the task of subduing the nations which had long threatened the peace of his people.

(1) Naturally the Philistines, who had overrun the land on the death of Saul, came in for attention first. Their country was invaded and their chief cities were reduced. So complete was their subjugation, they gave no further trouble during David's reign. A friendly alliance was formed with the Phœnicians, whose king, Hiram, became the life-long friend of David. Thus peace was assured on the west and northwest of Israel.

(2) David now turned his attention to his enemies on the east. Related by ties of blood to the Moabites, he had at one time left his father and mother under the protection of the king of Moab. A Jewish tradition declares that his parents were cruelly slain, though we have in Scripture no record of the motive which prompted David to smite the people of Moab.

(3) On the northeast were the Syrians, possessed of large armies with considerable strength. David marched against these, defeating them and taking valuable spoils which he set aside for the future temple.

(4) On the south lay the haughty Edomites who had long been bitter foes of their kinsmen, the Israelites. Against them David sent an army under Abishai, who defeated them with heavy loss. Their prince, Hadad, escaped to Egypt and in later years returned to harass Solomon.

By these conquests on the west and north, and on the east and south, David extended the boundaries of his kingdom, so that it included no less than five times as much territory as was occupied by the original twelve tribes. Thus, after long delay, due to the faithlessness of the people, the promise to Abraham was fulfilled and Israel possessed the land from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates.

*Organized and developed his kingdom.* Having proven himself a military genius by unvarying success in all directions, he is now to demonstrate his wonderful statesmanship, and to prove that he is no less a king than a soldier. We are told that David executed judgment and justice among all the people. Unlike the usual oriental sovereign he regarded the rights of his subjects and sought in every way to promote their happiness. With skill and energy he systematized and perfected the civil regulations and administered the affairs of government with a view to the peace and prosperity of the nation. As the religion of the people was inwoven with their national and political life, he lent himself to the development of the religious life of Israel, organizing, and at times personally directing, the religious rites.

Thus David brought the people to the golden age of their history. By his varied and wonderful services to the nation and by his deep devoutness he attained a unique place in the hearts of the people and his memory was lovingly cherished in all after history.

*David's Great Sin.*—David, by his sins and weak indulgences, laid the foundations for family and national disaster. In the incident of Uriah and Bathsheba, he fell into gross sin and committed crimes which mar the luster of his name. Not least among the evidences of the inspiration of the Scriptures is the fact that the weaknesses and follies of its noblest and best men are recorded with the utmost frankness.

Concerning David's sins it is but fair to remind ourselves that scarcely any other oriental monarch would have given such things a second thought. And it is certainly but proper that, while we condemn his sins with all severity, we shall at the same time bear in mind his repentance as, with heart broken for his iniquities, he pours out his grief in the fifty-first Psalm.

God mercifully forgave his sin, but the evil consequences of his guilt could not be eradicated. Both in his own family and in the national life the evil he had wrought bore fearful fruit as we shall see in our further studies.

*Preparation for the Building of the Temple.*—David prepared for the erection of a house for Jehovah. Finding himself dwelling in a house of cedar while the Lord dwelt in a tent, it came

into the heart of David to build a house for God. Because he had been a man of war and bloodshed, he was not permitted to carry out his design. This honor should be reserved for his son and successor, while he himself should gather material and prepare for the great work. Accordingly through the years he gave himself to the task of storing riches and making plans for the glorious temple which his son should build.

*Parting Charge to Solomon.*—David's parting charge to Solomon is characteristic, and indicates his dying wish for his loved son who was to reign in his stead: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses" (1 Kings 2: 2, 3).

## David and the Psalms.

About half of the Psalms (seventy-three) are ascribed to David, though we cannot in all cases be sure of the trustworthiness of these records. David was not the first writer of songs among the Hebrews, but he made a collection of sacred songs and himself wrote many devotional poems, thus stamping the whole with his character. Even before New Testament times the collection became known as the Psalms of David. A poet of the heart, David has been called a universal poet. His hymns of praise and thanksgiving and con-

fession seem to run the whole gamut of human experience and are loved and sung alike in palaces and hovels among all the nations of the earth.

### An Inspiring Career.

In the character and career of David, eight things stand out in distinctness.

(1) *A brave shepherd.* We are accustomed to think that David in defense of his flocks slew *a lion and a bear.* Rather his own statement appears to be: "*Whenever* a lion or a bear came against my flocks, I went forth and slew it." The foundations of David's character were laid during the days of the quiet shepherd life.

(2) *A gifted harpist.* David won his first public recognition by his skill in playing on the harp. Later when he was king in Jerusalem, he introduced stringed instruments into the temple in the worship of Jehovah, and taught the art of music to the whole people.

(3) *A glorious poet.* David began early to write sacred hymns of praise and worship, and through all of his varied career he continued to write such hymns, signalizing in these sacred poems the great events of his life.

(4) *A faithful friend.* The friendship of David and Jonathan has been admired and exalted through all the years. Under the most difficult and delicate conditions, even down to the untimely death of Jonathan on the field of battle, David maintained his firm devotion to the friend of his early years.

(5) *A loyal subject.* No man could have been more loyal to his king than was David to Saul. In David's eye Saul was the Lord's anointed, and as such he yielded to the poor demented monarch unfailing reverence and fidelity. Having learned how to obey he was the better prepared to rule.

(6) *An intrepid soldier.* David never led an unsuccessful campaign, and so far as we know he never lost a battle. He defeated and subdued all the surrounding nations, while his fame in war was such that the world-empires lying beyond never lifted a hand to oppose the growth of his kingdom.

(7) *A wise king.* If we would see the wisdom and power of David's constructive statesmanship, we need only to compare the enfeebled and divided state of the tribes of Israel when he came to the throne with the mighty empire which he bequeathed to Solomon.

(8) *"A man after God's own heart."* This is perhaps the strongest word of approval which Jehovah ever spoke concerning a man. Abraham was the "Friend of God," Moses was "the man of God," Daniel was "greatly beloved," but David was the "man after God's own heart."

## QUESTIONS.

How does David rank among Old Testament characters?

Into what sections does his life fall?

Describe David's shepherd life.

Tell something of David at the time of his coming to the court of Saul.

Relate the story of David's battle with Goliath.

Indicate the ways in which Saul's hatred for David manifested itself.

Tell of David among the Philistines.

Locate the cave of Adullam.

Relate incidents which illustrate David's bearing toward Saul.

What circumstances led to David's becoming king in Hebron?

What was the relation between his kingdom and that of Saul?

What conditions resulted in David's becoming king over all Israel?

Give an account of the capture of Jerusalem.

Name some nations against which David waged successful warfare.

What of his organiation and development of the kingdom.

How should we regard David's great sin?

What preparation did David make for the building of the Temple?

Describe David's parting charge to Solomon.

Tell of David and the Psalms.

Sum up briefly the characteristic features of David's career.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER X.

## THE DECLINE AND DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM: SOLOMON AND REHOBOAM.

Scripture Record—1 Kings, chapters 1–12; 2 Chronicles, chapters 1–11.

Selections for Reading and Study—1 Kings 3, 6, 8—12: 24.

Time—Accession of Solomon to Division of the Kingdom, 1022 to 982 B.C.*

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON (1 Kings 1–11; 2 Chronicles 1–9).

David and Solomon.
Solomon's Choice of Wisdom.
Builds the Temple.
Extensive Building Operations.
Commercial Enterprises.
Solomon's Wisdom and His Magnificence.
His Sad Decline.
The Nations in Solomon's Day.

THE WRITINGS OF SOLOMON.

Proverbs.
Ecclesiastes.
Song of Solomon.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED (1 Kings 12).

Jealousy of Ephraim.
Worldliness and Idolatry.
Heavy Taxation.
Jeroboam's Ambition.
Rehoboam's Foolish Course.

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* For a different chronology, see page 254.

# CHAPTER X.

## THE DECLINE AND DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM: SOLOMON AND REHOBOAM.

### The Reign of Solomon.

A study of the last days of David reveals developments and tendencies which prophesy the decline of the glorious kingdom he had built. The reign of Solomon is marked by increased splendor and outward pomp, but the forces of disintegration were at work sapping the foundations of the national strength.

*David and Solomon.*—David grew to manhood in the open fields following his father's sheep; Solomon grew up in an oriental harem amidst luxury and the enervating influence of court life. David was trained in the school of adversity and himself built the mighty kingdom over which he ruled; Solomon knew neither poverty nor adversity and, while yet of tender years, inherited a throne and kingdom. David made vast accumulations; Solomon made vast expenditures: David with singular energy and ability made provision for the king and the generation which should come after; Solomon lived on this lavish provision of his father and failed to make similar provision for the next generation. While the

reign of Solomon was one of dazzling glory and surpassing magnificence we are justified in characterizing it as essentially an era of decline.

*Solomon's Choice of Wisdom* (1 Kings 3: 5–15.)—Our first view of the young king in public life shows him in exceedingly fair light. A few miles north of Jerusalem, and in view from that city, was the height of Gibeon, an ancient seat of worship and for a long time the location of the tabernacle which Moses had constructed in the desert. At this place, in order to signalize the beginning of his reign, Solomon called together a mighty assembly of the people to present themselves before the Lord. Solomon himself provided for the people a thousand burnt sacrifices, and it became an occasion of national joy and worship.

The assembling of such vast multitudes and the solemn worship in which they engaged impressed the youthful Solomon with the high responsibilities which had come upon him, and the last night of the feast at Gibeon he dreamed a dream which reflected his state of mind. Jehovah appeared to him offering, for the sake of David his father, to give him whatsoever he should ask. Solomon replied: "Give thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" The request pleased the Lord and he declared that because Solomon had not asked long life, nor riches, nor the life of his enemies, but had asked wisdom to discern

judgment, therefore all of these should be given him: "There was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee."

Thus Solomon's life, like the life of Saul, opens in simple beauty and with rare charm. Never did young man face nobler opportunities for a glorious career of happiness and service.

*Builds the Temple.*—The most significant achievement of Solomon's reign was the building of the temple, which has since borne his name and which for richness and splendor surpassed all similar structures in the ancient world. We have seen that David had gathered vast stores of riches and precious stones and varied timbers and had made extensive preparations for the building. In the fourth year of Solomon's reign the foundations were laid and at the end of seven years the noble structure stood complete. For half a thousand years, until its destruction when Jerusalem fell, in 587 B.C., this temple stood as the pride of the Hebrew people and the center of the worship of Jehovah, a constant reminder of the wealth and glory of the days of the united kingdom.

*Extensive Building Operations.*—While the temple was the supreme accomplishment of Solomon's reign, other extensive building projects were carried out. Indeed, the king developed a passion for building such as marked so many oriental monarchs. For himself he erected a spacious palace, and for Pharaoh's daughter whom he had married, he built a house which would compare favorably with the royal houses

of her own native Egypt; other buildings in keeping with the costliness of the temple arose on Mt. Moriah, so that the whole hill was covered with a collection of wonderful buildings. When the natural surface of the hill proved insufficient to accommodate these numerous buildings, Solomon built around the hill vast structures, the remains of which may even now be seen in the immense stones visible at the Place of Wailing.

Besides the buildings erected in and around the capital city, Solomon conducted extensive building operations in all parts of the realm. Satisfied with the extent of his domains he contented himself with building and fortifying cities on the various borders of his territory. Notable among the cities which he built are Tadmor, afterwards called Palmyra, a trading center far out in the wilderness of Syria, and Thapsicus on the river Euphrates.

*Commercial Enterprises.*—The wealth of Solomon's day, making possible building operations which have been the wonder of all succeeding ages, was in large measure due to his friendly alliances with surrounding nations and the consequent opening up of trade channels by which the riches of many countries flowed freely into Solomon's realm.

The Phœnicians on the north were an active commercial people who carried on trade by land and sea over widely extended areas. With them Solomon maintained the closest alliance and from them he received both artisans and materials for

his building enterprises. Solomon was also closely allied to Egypt, having married a daughter of the reigning Pharaoh; from Egypt horses and chariots and various products of Egyptian art were imported into Palestine. Trade relations were established with the rich sections of the Arabian peninsula and with various countries on the Mediterranean as far as Spain, as also apparently with far-away India.

While the glory and wealth of the Hebrew people were thus increased, the spirit and intent of the Law of Moses, which provided that Israel should be a separate people, was violated and many perils and temptations were brought in along with the incoming tide of luxury and indulgence.

*Solomon's Wisdom and His Magnificence.*— Richly endowed by nature and specially endowed by divine decree, Solomon developed such wisdom as made him famous among the surrounding nations, while the splendor and wealth of his court came to be known throughout the world. The visit of the queen of Sheba is recorded as illustrating both his wisdom and his magnificence. "And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard" (1 Kings 10: 6, 7).

*His Sad Decline.*—As was the case with King Saul, Solomon's public life opened with manifestations of humility and obedience which gave fair promise of a career of godly living and wise ruling. With the increase of wealth and power, his heart, like the heart of Saul, was drawn away from Jehovah, and the weak indulgence of his later days is in marked contrast with the energy and fidelity of his earlier years. "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father" (1 Kings 11: 4).

*The Nations in Solomon's Day.*—A glance at the peoples surrounding Israel in the time of David and Solomon sheds light on this part of Israel's history.

*Egypt* was ruled by a dynasty which had been weakened by inward dissension and by foreign wars. This accounts for the fact that Egypt permitted without dissent the growth of the kingdom under David and its continuance under Solomon. It is significant of the real attitude of Egypt that Jeroboam went up out of that country to lead a revolt against the reigning king; and that Hadad, a brother-in-law of the Egyptian king, went up to Edom to harass Solomon on the south; and especially that in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Solomon's successor, Shishak king of Egypt invaded Palestine, even entering Jerusalem and taking away the treasures of the sacred temple.

*Assyria* far to the northeast had, after the death of Tiglath-Pileser I, lost much of its ancient power and vigor, and did not again attain its former place for a hundred years after David's day. Someone has said that God seems to have laid a quieting hand on the nations around, which would have been the natural enemies of the growing Israelite kingdom, in order to develop the Hebrew monarchy.

*The Syrophoenicians,* a vigorous commercial people to the north, were allies of the Hebrew people, their king Hiram being the close friend of David and, after his death, of Solomon.

## The Writings of Solomon.

Three Scripture books are ascribed to Solomon: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon.

*The book of Proverbs* constitutes a treatise on the practical problems of daily living. The warnings of the book suggest perils which arise only in a settled state with the multiplied temptations which arise in the midst of wealth and prosperity. Solomon was the author in much the same sense in which David was the author of the book of Psalms; he wrote many of the Proverbs himself; he collected wise sayings by others; and to these, additions were made in later days.

*Ecclesiastes* is supposed to reflect the experiences of Solomon in the enjoyment of worldly

success and wealth. It is really a discussion of the old question as to what is the best good and ends with this conclusion: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12: 13).

*The Song of Solomon* is a beautiful poem in which devout souls have found an allegory of the love of Christ for his people.

## The Kingdom Divided.

That the vast empire of David and Solomon, which appeared to have elements of enduring strength, should crumble to pieces upon Solomon's death must cause some surprise. A close scrutiny of the conditions which obtained during the last years of Solomon's reign, together with a consideration of certain divisive elements, will shed light on this bit of history. At least five elements contributed to the dividing of the kingdom.

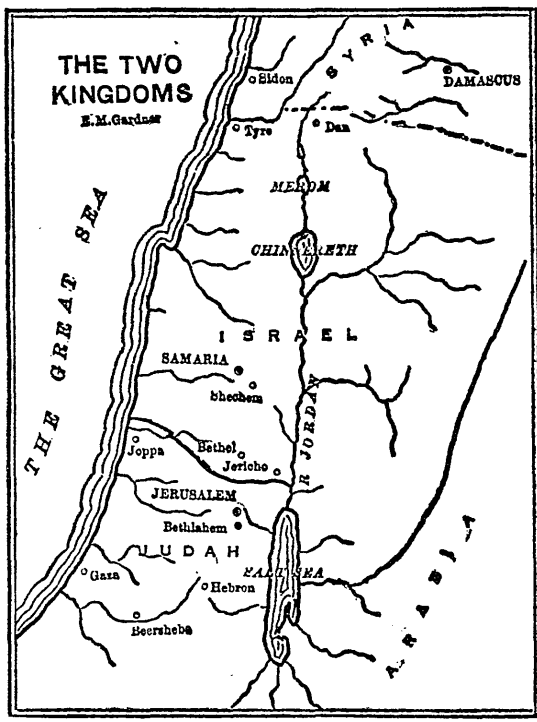
*Jealousy of Ephraim.*—Between the leading tribes, Judah and Ephraim, there had long been rivalry, and at times bitter jealousy. Such jealousy on the part of Ephraim had flamed out in connection with the exploits of both Gideon and Jephthah. It will be recalled that, during the seven years of David's reign in Hebron, Judah had followed the standards of David, while Ephraim, leading the other tribes, had acknowledged the rule of the house of Saul. When the tribes

were united under David, the strong and wise rule of that king, and, after him, of Solomon, served to hold the tribes together. When these bonds were relaxed the pride of Ephraim, which tribe doubtless had chafed under the preëminence accorded to Judah, asserted itself and the division resulted.

*Worldliness and Idolatry.*—The strength of Israel as a nation lay in fidelity and obedience to the Law of Jehovah. Solomon had been drawn away from the plain paths in which his father David had walked and he in turn had led the nation away from God. The spirit of worldliness, the deceptive influence of riches, the evils of idolatry, tended to weaken the character, and to destroy the national consciousness, of the Hebrews and paved the way for national disaster. "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father" (1 Kings 11: 4–6).

*Heavy Taxation.*—Solomon's kingdom as such had grown immensely rich, but its wealth grew at the expense of the happiness and prosperity of the people. Riches flowed in from foreign lands, but these went to increase the exchequer of the king, rather than to meet the needs of the people.

A chief question at Solomon's death, in connection with the succession to the throne, was the reduction of the oppressive burdens which had been placed upon the people. This was the question upon which the leaders broke with Rehoboam.




*Jeroboam's Ambition.*—Jeroboam had signalized himself as a man of forceful leadership in connection with some of Solomon's building operations, and had in consequence been placed over the tribe of Ephraim to which he belonged.

A prophet of God had given him indication that he should become ruler of ten of the tribes of Israel, which, because of Solomon's sins, should be rent from his house. When this reached the ears of Solomon he sought to slay Jeroboam, who escaped to Egypt. At the death of Solomon, Jeroboam came up out of Egypt and placed himself at the head of the deputation which waited upon Rehoboam. His presence and influence largely account for the defection of the ten tribes.

*Rehoboam's Foolish Course.*—Rehoboam went to Shechem to receive the indorsement of the northern tribes and to be crowned king of Israel. When the elders came with the reasonable request that their burdens should be lightened, he answered them roughly and declared that he would make their burdens heavier than they had been under Solomon his father. This foolish word stirred into a flame the slumbering discontent and resentment, and the ten northern tribes set up the standard of revolt and established a new kingdom, calling Jeroboam to the throne.

## QUESTIONS.

Draw a contrast between David and Solomon.

Tell of Solomon's choice of wisdom.

What of the building of the Temple?

Describe other building operations conducted by Solomon.

What of Solomon's wisdom and magnificence?

What were the evidences of Solomon's decline?

Describe conditions in Solomon's day: (1) In Egypt, (2) in Assyria, (3) in Syro-Phœnicia.

Tell something of the books of Scripture written by Solomon.

How did the jealousy of Ephraim contribute to the division of the kingdom?

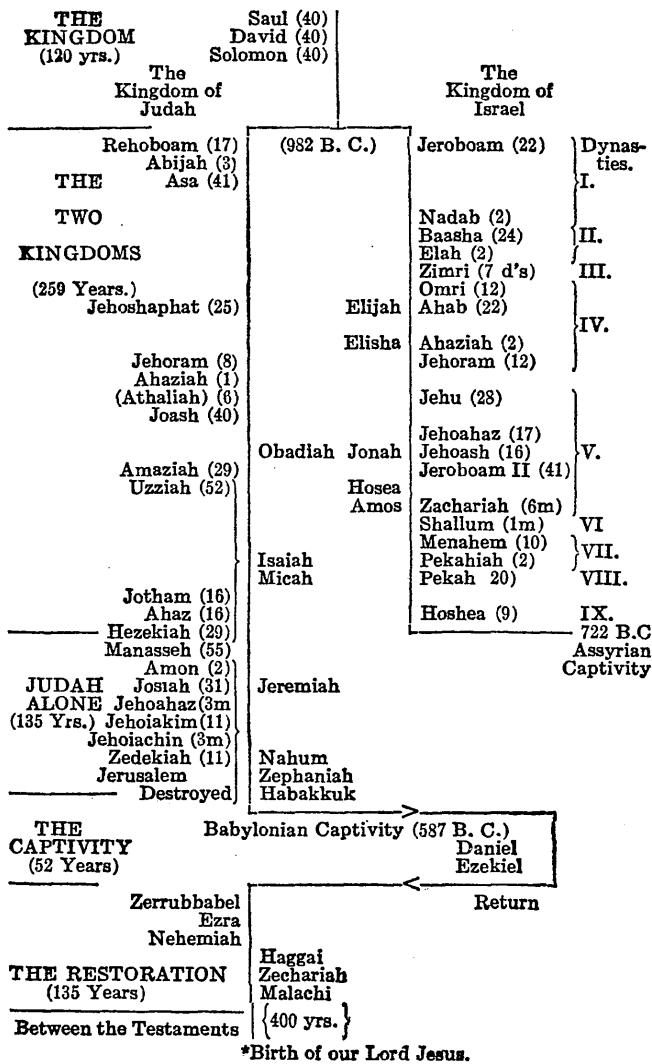
What of worldliness and idolatry in this connection?

How did heavy taxation play a part?

What of Jeroboam's ambition?

What was Rehoboam's foolish course?

# OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.




*Birth of our Lord Jesus.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER XI.

## ISRAEL, THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

Scripture Record—(Along with the record of Judah, the Southern Kingdom) 1 Kings, chapter 12 to 2 Kings, chapter 17.

Selections for Reading and Study—1 Kings 12: 25—13: 34, 17–22; 2 Kings 1–6, 9, 10, 17.

Time—982 to 722 B.C.*

JEROBOAM, THE FIRST KING (1 Kings 12: 25—14: 20; 2 Chronicles 13).

A Vigorous Ruler.
The Golden Calves.

THE REIGN OF OMRI (1 Kings 16: 21–28).

AHAB AND JEZEBEL (1 Kings 16: 29—22: 40).

THE MINISTRY OF ELIJAH.

Elijah's Ministry Opens.
The Crisis of His Ministry.
His Ministry Seems to Fail.
Elijah's Ministry Not a Failure.

ELISHA AND HIS MIRACLES.

JEHU, THE RUTHLESS REFORMER (2 Kings 9–10).

THE REIGN OF JEROBOAM II (2 Kings 14: 16–29).

A Successful Ruler.
Jonah Prophesies against Nineveh.
Hosea and Amos.

ISRAEL IS LED CAPTIVE TO ASSYRIA (2 Kings 17).

* For a different chronology, see page 254.

# CHAPTER XI.

## ISRAEL, THE NORTHERN KINGDOM.

We follow first the course of the Northern kingdom, reserving for the next chapter a study of Judah, the Southern kingdom. The Northern kingdom, which henceforth we call Israel, stood for 259 years and during this period it had nineteen kings belonging to nine different families or dynasties. Of these kings we study particularly those which seem to be of most importance, lingering somewhat with the great prophets through whom God sent messages to the people of Israel.

### Jeroboam, the First King.

*A Vigorous Ruler.*—Jeroboam, the first and greatest of the kings of Israel, impressed himself so deeply on the national life that we can trace his influence through all the after years. He showed early in his reign that he was more concerned about his own place and power than that the people should fear God. He ruled with vigor, selecting Tirzah as the seat of his government and fortifying the ancient Shechem, which was the center of his dominions.

*The Golden Calves.*—The one act of daring folly which forever mars the name of Jeroboam

was the setting up of idols at Dan and Bethel. Fearing that his people, if they went to worship in Jerusalem, would find their hearts turning toward the king of Judah, he selected two ancient shrines, Dan on the northern boundary, and Bethel on the southern boundary. Here in imitation of worship to which he had grown accustomed in Egypt, he set up golden calves, saying, "These be thy gods, O Israel." Instead of requiring the people to assemble three times annually, according to the law of Moses, he permitted them to assemble once each year. "The time for this gathering was one month after the Passover, so that it would have been extremely inconvenient to attend both at Bethel and at Jerusalem." This act of defiance was not permitted to go unchallenged; God sent a prophet out of Judah to Bethel who boldly rebuked the folly of the king and predicted a day of vengeance on the priests of Bethel. The inspired writers speak of "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Thus the man who by his energy and gifts might have been a man of destiny stands out as a man of infamy. After Jeroboam came Nadab, Baasha, Elah, and Zimri, but with these names we need not linger.

### The Reign of Omri.

Omri founded the fourth dynasty and proved himself a vigorous but unscrupulous ruler. Having reigned six years at Tirzah, he purchased the site of Samaria and built there his capital. "No

better site for a capital could have been selected in the length and breadth of Palestine,—a strong position, rich environs, central situation, and an elevation sufficient to catch untainted the cool, healthy breezes of the sea" (Murray). While he strengthened and extended the kingdom, showing himself a soldier of intrepid ability, he did much to corrupt the people and lead them into idolatry. Little space is given in the Scriptures to the reign of Omri, but the references to this king on ancient monuments discovered in modern times show that he impressed himself deeply upon the nations of his time.

### Ahab and Jezebel.

In order to strengthen his alliance with the Phœnician kingdom, Omri sought the hand of Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of the Phœnicians, for Ahab, his son and successor. A bold, unscrupulous woman, Jezebel instituted the most cruel persecution against the worshipers of Jehovah and sought by every possible means to make Baal-worship the national religion. Ahab, though a brave soldier and a forceful king, was dominated by the evil spirit of the queen and yielded himself to her plans for the up-rooting of all remnants of the true faith. At this time and under these conditions, God raised up Elijah, the rough-clad and stern-spirited prophet who, alone and single-handed, waged relentless warfare against the worship of Baal.

## The Ministry of Elijah.

*Elijah's Ministry Opens.*—In the upland fastnesses of his native Gilead, Elijah had been hearing of the high-handed course of Queen Jezebel in suppressing the worship of the true God and establishing Baal-worship as the national religion. At last, sudden as the flashing of a meteor, he appeared, clad in garments of the desert, in the midst of Ahab's court; denouncing with vigor the idolatry of the court and of the people, in the name of Jehovah he declared, "There shall be neither rain nor dew these years save at my word." Having delivered his message to the astonished king and court, the prophet slipped away from Samaria and hid himself to await God's call for another move in the mighty contest which had begun.

For perhaps a year, Elijah lived in quiet seclusion beside the brook Cherith, probably in the wild mountains of Judea near the Jordan valley. Here when other supply failed, ravens "brought him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening." When at length the brook failed, the prophet was directed to Zarepheth, a Phœnician village on the seashore between Tyre and Sidon. Here he was sustained by a widow and in grateful recognition of her kindness, when her son was stricken by death, he restored the lad to life, this being the first recorded miracle of raising from the dead.

*The Crisis of His Ministry.*—When three years of fearful drought had passed, and the whole land was parched and blackened, Elijah again and as suddenly appeared to Ahab, now in quest of water and forage for his horses and mules, and bade him assemble the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Ashtoreth on the heights of Carmel that there might be a final test as between Baal and Jehovah.

It is difficult to conceive a grander spectacle. On one side are the king and his court with an immense array of false prophets and a great concourse of people. On the other side stands the lone but unfearing prophet of Jehovah, quiet and confident. It is agreed that each side shall prepare an altar and an offering. First Baal, then Jehovah, shall be entreated to send fire to devour the offering,—the god that answers by fire he shall be the god. The priests and prophets of Baal entreated their god; goaded by the biting sarcasm of Elijah, they lashed themselves into fury and cried aloud, but their cries and prayers were of no avail. Baal did not respond. When the hour for the evening sacrifice drew near, Elijah, having prepared his altar and his offering, called upon Jehovah to vindicate himself. Instantly his prayer received answer. God sent fire, which consumed "the burnt sacrifice and the wood, and the stones and the dust, and licked up even the water that was in the trench." This marvelous manifestation of divine power brought its inevitable result; the people were overwhelmed

and with one voice cried, "Jehovah, he is the God: Jehovah, he is the God." At the instance of Elijah the people, now indignant toward the Baal prophets by whom they have been deceived and misled, hurry them to the brink of the mountain and hurl them down the precipice to the depths hundreds of feet below.

While Ahab and his courtiers feast, Elijah again betakes himself to prayer; this time for rain which, according to the word of Jehovah, by his prophet, has been withhheld for three years. Assured that his prayer is heard, he summons Ahab to hasten back to Jezreel, his royal palace, and placing himself before the chariot of the king as his faithful subject, he runs across the valley and up the heights of Jezreel.

*His Ministry Seems to Fail.*—In this hour of victory the word comes from Jezebel, "The gods do so to me and more also if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." It was clearly an impotent threat, a threat which if Jezebel could have executed she would never have made. But it had its desired effect. Coming at a time when the prophet was worn in mind and body, when he was flushed with a supposed victory, this threatening word of the enraged queen sent the mighty man, who had dared to face the king and all the false prophets, hurrying away to seek shelter for his life. Not daring to stay, even in the neighboring kingdom of Judah, he hurries on south and plunging into the wilderness he goes a day's journey. Later he

makes his way, probably, to the lone mountain in Arabia where, in the midst of lightning and earthquake, God had given the Ten Commandments, and there receives reassuring visions of God's goodness and his glory. From the desert Elijah returns to the Jordan valley and selects Elisha to be his minister and successor.

*Elijah's Ministry Not a Failure.*—The fiery Tishbite stood like a mighty wall against the idolatry of his day, comforting the beleaguered servants of Jehovah and terrifying his enemies. While the evil currents proved too strong to be overcome, the ministry of Elijah, together with that of Elisha his successor, stayed somewhat the tides of evil and postponed the day of national punishment. Besides the fruitfulness of his ministry in his own day, the character and career of Elijah have been in all succeeding ages a challenge to the followers of God and an inspiration to the noblest daring and the highest living. Like Enoch before him he was translated, that he should not see death.

## Elisha and His Miracles.

Upon the ascension of Elijah his mantle fell upon Elisha and henceforth for many years this prophet continued to do battle against idolatry. A list of some of the miracles he wrought will give an idea of the nature and extent of his activities.

(1) The separating of the waters of Jordan that he might walk over dry-shod. (2 Kings 2: 13, 14.)

(2) The healing of the bitter spring of Jericho by the use of salt. (2 Kings 2: 19–22.)

(3) The calling out of two bears to destroy forty-two children at Bethel. (2 Kings 2: 24.)

(4) Multiplying a cruse of oil and thus saving the widow of a prophet from her creditors. (2 Kings 4: 1–7.)

(5) The raising to life of the Shunammite's son. (2 Kings 4: 8–37.)

(6) Rendering a pot of poisoned pottage fit for food by casting meal into it. (2 Kings 4: 38–41.)

(7) The multiplying of some barley loaves and some roasted ears of corn so that they sufficed for a hundred people. (2 Kings 4: 42–44.)

(8) The recovering of Naaman, the Syrian, from his leprosy. (2 Kings 5.)

Elijah and Elisha left no sacred writings, but they wrought mightily in word and deed. In a time of declension and idolatry, they rebuked kings, exhorted the nation, stood for the highest ideals in religious and civic life. Their ministry is especially marked by the prevalence of miracles. Each wrought the miracle of raising from the dead, besides many other striking works. Not before, since the days of the Exodus, have we found such abundance of miracles, nor do we again in Old Testament history find a period so marked by the miraculous.

## Jehu, the Ruthless Reformer.

The house of Omri, represented by four kings, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram, had reigned almost fifty years and, despite the influence of Elijah and Elisha, this wicked dynasty had led Israel constantly deeper into idolatry. Another revolution was at hand.

Jehu, captain of King Jehoram's army now at Ramoth-gilead engaged in warfare with Syria, was at the instance of Elisha anointed king by one of the sons of the prophets and was immediately crowned by the military leaders. Hurrying across the Jordan and driving furiously across the plain of Esdraelon, the newly-crowned king slew Jehoram, exterminated the house of Ahab, and inaugurated a bloody revolution. Commissioned to uproot Baal worship, Jehu entered with relentless energy upon the task. Pretending to be zealous for Baal, he called a convocation of the worshipers of that god in the temple in Samaria dedicated to his service, taking pains to exclude any worshipers of Jehovah who through fright or otherwise might have been drawn in. At a given signal, eighty armed men, stationed at the entrances of the temple, ruthlessly destroyed this whole assembly of Baal devotees. Throughout the whole realm, the idols of Baal were thrown down and every effort was put forth to destroy utterly the idolatry which had, under the preceding reigns, taken such deep root.

As might be supposed, the effects of such a reformation wrought in bloodshed were superficial and temporary. Jehu, zealous as he was in the destruction of idolatry, was a stranger to piety and devoid of those finer qualities which mark the true religious reformer.

## The Reign of Jeroboam II.

*A Successful Ruler.*—A great-grandson of Jehu and the greatest of the five kings of Jehu's house, Jeroboam II reigned for a period of forty-one years, and by his skill and energy restored Israel to something of the glory and prosperity which marked the golden days of David and Solomon. He gave himself to promoting husbandry and stock-raising, and in many ways contributed to the happiness and prosperity of his people. His reign possesses especial interest because during this time there appeared three prophets, Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, who left behind them writings of permanent value.

*Jonah Prophesies Against Nineveh.*—During the reign of Jeroboam II, Nineveh loomed on the horizon as a threatening menace to the kingdom of Israel. The prophet Jonah was called to go to this great city, to denounce its wickedness, and to announce its impending doom. Knowing well the compassion of Jehovah, Jonah foresaw what would happen as a result of his mission—that Nineveh would repent and that God would spare the city. As a patriot, devoted to the welfare of Israel, Jonah had little love for Nineveh. He did

not desire that the city which threatened the very existence of his own loved land should be spared. Hence, he refused to go to Nineveh and took ship for Tarshish, a port on the coast of Spain. Arrested by a storm and brought back by a great fish, he at length took his journey to Nineveh. For forty days he cried in the streets of the city against its idolatry, declaring that Jehovah would utterly destroy Nineveh. When Nineveh repented, God's wrath was averted and the threatened punishment was withheld. Seeing that this old-time enemy of Israel was spared, Jonah gave vent to his displeasure in no uncertain terms. It is to be regretted that the incident of Jonah's deliverance by means of the great fish has been so magnified as to obscure the real message of the book, which is that God's compassion passed beyond the narrow limits of his chosen Israel and embraced not only all men but all creatures.

The four chapters of the book of Jonah have been happily characterized as follows:

Plays truant (chapter 1).
Prays to Jehovah (chapter 2).
Preaches to Nineveh (chapter 3).
Pouts and is reproved (chapter 4).

*Hosea and Amos.*—These prophets lived during the worldly and idolatrous reign of Jeroboam II. Concerning their personal lives we know little save that which is revealed in their writings. During these dark days of national apostasy, they boldly rebuked idolatry and faithfully

called the people to return to the worship of the true God. The ministry of these men served to check for a time the drift toward ruin, but when their voices were hushed the nation hastened to its doom.

The following outlines of the books of Hosea and Amos, taken from the New Normal Manual, indicate the nature of their prophecies:

Hosea—

I. Israel's unfaithfulness symbolized by the prophet's unhappy marriage. (Chapters 1–3.)

II. Warnings and entreaties to Israel to turn to God. (Chapters 4–14.)

Amos—

I. Amos denounces surrounding nations. (Chapters 1, 2.)

II. Amos denounces Israel. (Chapters 3–6.)

III. Visions of overthrow to be followed by restoration. (Chapters 7–11.)

Hosea sets forth vividly the undying love of Jehovah for his faithless people, while Amos asserts divine justice.

### Israel is Led Captive to Assyria.

After Jeroboam II, the Northern kingdom stood about forty years, but increasing weakness within and threatening enemies without foretokened coming ruin. Six weak kings, usually ascending the throne by ruthless assassination,

succeeded each other and conditions grew steadily worse until during the reign of Hoshea, Samaria fell and the kingdom came to an end.

Rising into prominence about 900 B.C., the Assyrian empire, with Nineveh as its capital and chief city, continued until the fall of Nineveh (607 B.C.) to dominate the eastern world, affecting vitally the interests of both Israel and Judah. During the reign of Pekah, Tiglath-pileser II invaded the domains of Israel and carried captive the inhabitants of Gilead, on the east of the Jordan, and the people of Galilee, north of the plain of Esdraelon. Thus the kingdom was reduced so that in Hoshea's day it included only the city of Samaria and sections adjacent. On the death of Tiglath-pileser and the accession of Shalmaneser, Hoshea foolishly made alliance with Egypt and refused to pay the usual tribute to Assyria. Before aid could come from Egypt, the armies of Shalmaneser swept west, besieged Samaria, and cast Hoshea into prison. With desperate courage and with unutterable suffering, the people of Samaria resisted for three years. During this time Shalmaneser died and his successor, Sargon, took the city in 722 B.C., marching the best of its inhabitants away to the region of Nineveh. Here they are lost to history, and all efforts to trace the destinies of "the lost ten tribes of Israel" have been futile.

To occupy the land thus left without inhabitants, Sargon brought colonists from Babylon and other distant parts of his realm. These mingled

with the handful of poor peasants who had been left in the land. Out of this mixture of distinct races with various religions, grew the Samaritan people of whom we hear much in New Testament times.

## QUESTIONS.

Give outline of Old Testament history down to the division of the kingdom. How long did the Northern kingdom stand? How many kings reigned during this period?

Characterize the reign of Jeroboam.

Why did he set up the golden calves?

What was the chief event in the reign of Omri?

Describe Ahab and Jezebel.

How did Elijah's ministry open?

Tell of the crisis on Mt. Carmel.

Describe the seeming failure of Elijah's ministry.

Show that Elijah's ministry was not a failure.

Name some miracles wrought by Elisha.

What was the character of Jehu's reign?

What of the reign of Jeroboam II?

Tell of Jonah and his ministry.

Tell something of Amos and Hosea.

Who was Israel's last king?

When were the people of the Northern kingdom taken captive? By whom?

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER XII.

## JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM: TO THE FALL OF SAMARIA.

Scripture Record—2 Kings, chapters 18–25 (along with the Record of Israel); 2 Chronicles, chapters 10–29.

Selections for Reading and Study—2 Chronicles 12, 14–20, 24, 26.

Time—982 to 722 B.C.*

THE KINGDOMS COMPARED.

Advantages of Israel.
Advantages of Judah.

MUTUAL RELATIONS.

Hostility, 60 years.
Alliance, 30 years.
Renewed Hostility, 169 years.

THE REIGN OF REHOBOAM (1 Kings 12: 21–24, 14: 21–31; 2 Chronicles 11, 12).

ASA AND JEHOSHAPHAT (1 Kings 15: 9–24; 2 Chronicles 14–20).

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE (2 Kings 12; 2 Chronicles 24).

UZZIAH REIGNS FIFTY-TWO YEARS (2 Chronicles 26).

THE APOSTASY UNDER AHAZ (2 Kings 16).

HEZEKIAH'S REIGN (2 Kings 18–20; 2 Chronicles 29–32).

A Good King.
A Great Passover.
Sennacherib's Army Destroyed.
Hezekiah's Life Lengthened.

THE PROPHET ISAIAH.

The Prophet's Call.
His Long Usefulness.

* For a different chronology, see page 254.

# CHAPTER XII.

## JUDAH, THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM: TO THE FALL OF SAMARIA.

We now turn our attention to Judah, the Southern kingdom, and study that period of Judah's history in which the two kingdoms stood side by side. Having already followed the experiences of the Northern kingdom to its fall in 722 B.C., we may compare the two kingdoms and consider how they stood related to each other during this time.

### The Kingdoms Compared.

*Advantages of Israel.*—The Northern kingdom possessed many advantages: (1) Israel had much the larger and much the richer territory. With her 9,500 square miles, as against Judah's 3,500 square miles, she was nearly three times as large in area. But this does not give an adequate conception of the superior resources of Israel. In her territory were the richest lands and the most fruitful plains of Palestine. The plain of Jezreel, the Esdraelon plain, the Jordan valley, and the beautiful hill country of Ephraim, were all within the bounds of Israel, while the greater part of Judah's territory was rough and

barren. (2) Israel had for the most part the schools of the prophets. These sacred centers, made glorious by association with Samuel, their founder, wielded no mean influence over the religious and civil life of the people.

*Advantages of Judah.*—But not all the advantages were with Israel: (1) Judah had Jerusalem for its capital. It is difficult to overestimate the blessings which came to the Southern kingdom from the possession of this splendid capital and sacred shrine. On Mt. Moriah where stood the Temple, according to an accepted tradition, Abraham had offered Isaac; there also the angel of the Lord, in answer to the entreaty of David, had stayed the plague beside the threshing floor of Araunah; there Solomon had reigned in surpassing glory. While Israel's capitals shifted and while Samaria, its chief capital, was marred by associations of idolatry, Jerusalem, with its hallowed associations, continued to be the civil and religious capital of Judah. (2) Judah had Solomon's Temple which was the accepted center of the religious life of the nation. Hither the tribes had been wont to come up from all parts to present themselves before Jehovah. The poor idolatrous shrines at Bethel and Dan were a pitiful exchange for the noblest and most imposing Temple ever raised by human hands. (3) Judah had further advantage in the matter of her hereditary rulers which were all of the house of David. While the kings of Israel were without exception wicked and selfish men, many of Ju-

dah's kings walked in the ways of their father, David, and sought to lead the people back to the worship of the true God.

### Mutual Relations.

Closely related as the two kingdoms were by ties of blood and by bonds of religion, and lying side by side with no natural boundary to separate them, it was inevitable that each should affect the life of the other. There was first a period of war, followed by a season of alliance, this in turn followed by a longer period of hostility.

*Hostility.*—For sixty years after the division of the kingdom there was petty warfare between Israel and Judah. Rehoboam and his successors refused to concede to the ten tribes the right to revolt and the Southern kingdom kept up a prolonged effort to compel them by force to return to the fold. These efforts resulted at times in pitched battles in which there was heavy loss of life on both sides, while at all times there was a hostile attitude.

*Alliance.*—In the days of Ahab and his successors in Israel and of Jehoshaphat in Judah, there was a period of alliance between the two kingdoms which lasted some thirty years. This alliance was cemented by the marriage of Ahab's daughter, Athaliah, to Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram. The kingdom of Syria loomed on the horizon to the northeast of Israel, threatening both of the small kingdoms in Palestine and thus causing them to band together for mutual defence.

*Renewed Hostility.*—This alliance was brief, and during the remaining 169 years in which the two kingdoms stood side by side they were never afterwards in alliance.

During 395 years in which Judah, the Southern kingdom, stood after her separation from the Northern tribes, kings of the house of David sat on the throne. While the history of Israel, the Northern kingdom, is blackened by revolution and by the frequent usurpation of the throne by assassination, there being no less than eight changes in the ruling family, Judah through all of her long history was ruled by descendants of David.

### The Reign of Rehoboam.

We have already seen something of the character of Rehoboam in connection with the division of the kingdom. A true son of Solomon his father, he multiplied the wives of his harem and encouraged such indulgences and excesses as weakened the military strength of his kingdom. Taking advantage of this fact Shishak, king of Egypt, brought up an armed force against Judah, taking certain fortified cities. Marching into Jerusalem itself, he despoiled the Temple of its richest treasures.

### Asa and Jehoshaphat.

The reign of Asa is marked by the invasion of Zerah, an Ethiopian prince, who came up against Judah with a host of a million men and threatened

to overrun and crush the whole land. Asa bravely marshalled his troops and, strong in faith, marched out and inflicted signal defeat upon the invaders.

Jehoshaphat was a great and good king and under his reign the kingdom attained to a high degree of prosperity. Soon after coming to the throne, he organized a far-reaching campaign for the instruction of his people in the law of the Lord, and for this end he sent forth the Levites and even the princes throughout his realm. Even Jehoshaphat seems to have gone on a personal tour of the land calling upon his subjects to return to the true worship of Jehovah. His chief weakness seems to have been in his inclination to enter alliances, such for example as that with Ahab, king of Israel, which alliances were forbidden by the law of Moses. On his return from Ramoth-gilead, where he had assisted Ahab against the Syrians, he was rebuked by Jehu, a prophet of the Lord, for thus aiding the ungodly.

### Joash Repairs the Temple.

For six years Athaliah, a usurping queen, sat on the throne of Judah. When the people were disgusted by her cruelty and her foreign practices, Jehoiada the high priest proclaimed Joash king, and had Athaliah slain. Under the guiding and restraining influence of Jehoiada, Joash reigned with moderation and did much to deepen in the hearts of the people reverence for divine things.

Among other reforms, he inaugurated a movement for the repair of the Temple, which had been allowed to fall into ruins during the idolatrous reign of Athaliah. For this purpose he collected much money, which was freely given by the princes and the people. When his faithful friend and counselor died at an advanced age, the king turned his heart to idolatry and did much to corrupt the people.

### Uzziah Reigns Fifty-Two Years.

Uzziah was an energetic and resourceful ruler; by his wise administration of the affairs of the kingdom he restored in some measure the wealth and prosperity which existed in the days of David and Solomon. But the achievements of his earlier reign are shadowed by the folly and failure which marked his later years. Moved to pride by his prosperity, he forgot Jehovah and exalted his own will against the divine wil' Assuming the function of the priests and essaying to burn incense on the golden altar in the sanctuary, he was smitten with leprosy and to the day of his death lived in a separate house apart from his court and people.

### The Apostasy Under Ahaz.

Ahaz reigned sixteen years and did much to corrupt the people of his realm. Like Ahab in the Northern kingdom, he encouraged Baal-worship and all manner of idolatry. He went be-

yond all the wicked kings of Israel or Judah in that he burned his own children in sacrifice in the valley of Hinnom. When Judah was weakened by excesses and iniquities and Ahaz was sorely pressed by his enemies, he went to Damascus to meet his master Tiglath-pileser, but received scant sympathy from that monarch.

Isaiah, in the seventh, eigth and ninth chapters of his prophecy, makes appeal to Ahaz and the people to fear Jehovah: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8: 20). In his refusal of the counsels of the great prophet, Ahaz stands in marked contrast with Hezekiah who, in the face of Isaiah's denunciation and warning, humbled himself and cried unto the Lord.

### Hezekiah's Reign.

*A Good King.*—In contrast with both the kings that went before and those that came after, Hezekiah was a devout man and a wise ruler. In the sixth year of his reign Samaria fell and the people of Israel were carried away to Assyria. While the neighboring kingdom was thus in its death-throes, Hezekiah was, by his personal and official influence, restoring Jehovah worship in Judah and bringing about that revival of godliness which gave Judah a new lease on life and enabled that kingdom to stand yet many years.

*A Great Passover.*—Sending his messengers throughout the realm, the king summoned all the

people to assemble at Jerusalem for the observance of the Passover, and in their zeal they prolonged this feast to fourteen days. On their return from this remarkable convocation in which both their faith and their zeal were quickened, the people destroyed in wide sections the idols and heathen altars which had been erected during preceding reigns. In all of this the king was aided by the prophet Isaiah, of whom we shall see more in our next chapter.

*Sennacherib's Army Destroyed.*—Moved doubtless by Egyptian intrigue, Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria and refused to pay the tribute which Ahaz, his father, had promised. Already the Assyrians under Shalmaneser had reduced Samaria, and now Sennacherib, having come to the Assyrian throne, turned his attention toward Judah, and sent Hezekiah an insulting and threatening letter, demanding his surrender. In this hour of sore trial Hezekiah's faith did not fail. He spread the letter before the Lord in the Temple and besought the divine help. The prophet Isaiah declared that the haughty Assyrian should be miraculously smitten and should return broken and helpless to his own land. In one night, shortly after, a blast from the Lord slew 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers.

"The angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved and forever were still.

"And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf."

*Hezekiah's Life Lengthened.*—While Sennacherib was threatening to invade Hezekiah's dominions, the Jewish king fell ill. His desire to recover was doubtless deepened by the thought of the sad plight in which his people would be left, and he cried to God for healing. The prophet Isaiah was sent to tell him that his prayer was heard and that fifteen years were to be added to his life. When Hezekiah asked for a token to confirm this promise, the shadow on the great dial set up by his father, Ahaz, was made to go backward ten degrees. In accordance with the word of the prophet, a plaster of figs was applied to the affected parts, and the king was speedily restored to health.

The news of Hezekiah's miraculous recovery went abroad to surrounding nations, and among others the king of Babylon, Merodach-baladan, sent an embassage to congratulate him. In a spirit of pride the king showed these messengers the stores and treasures of his kingdom. For this worldly spirit of ostentation Isaiah rebuked the king, declaring that one day all of these treasures should be carried away into the land of the king who had sent these messengers.

## The Prophet Isaiah.

By reason of his personal character, his service to his nation, and especially his written prophecies, Isaiah holds a unique place among the Hebrew prophets.

*The Prophet's Call.*—In the sixth chapter of his prophecy, Isaiah tells in his own words the wonderful story of his call: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hands, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye in-

deed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not" (Isaiah 6: 1–9, R. V.).

*His Long Usefulness.*—During the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, through more than fifty years, Isaiah wielded a potent influence in the civil and religious life of Judah. Possessed of the highest culture, having free access to the kings and the ruling classes, Isaiah during critical times in the history of the kingdom stood bravely for the highest ideals of true religion and did much to stay the evil day which had long been predicted. The fall of Samaria occurred during his ministry, and the prophet used this providence as the basis of warning and appeal to the kingdom of Judah.

*Outline of His Book.*—The following outline of Isaiah's prophecy, given also in the New Normal Manual, sets forth the divisions of the book:

I. Prophecies touching Judah. (Chapters 1–39.)
   1. Warning and promise. (Chapters 1–12.)
   2. Concerning hostile nations. (Chapters 13–35.)
   3. Jehovah delivers Hezekiah and Jerusalem. (Chapters 36–39.)

II. Messianic prophecies. (Chapters 40–66.)
   1. God will deliver his people. (Chapters 40–48.)
   2. God will send his servant (Messiah). (Chapters 49–57.)
   3. This Servant shall reign supreme and triumphant. (Chapters 58–66.)

## QUESTIONS.

What period of history are we now to study?

What advantages did the Northern kingdom possess?

Indicate some advantages of the Southern kingdom.

Set forth the relations which existed between the two kingdoms.

What was the general character of Rehoboam's reign?

What event signalized the reign of Asa? Describe the reign of Jehoshaphat.

What event marked the reign of Joash?

What was the length and the character of Uzziah's reign?

What was the character of Hezekiah's reign?

Tell of the destruction of Sennacherib's army.

Why, and for how many years, was Hezekiah's life lengthened?

Describe Isaiah's call.

Tell of his long career of usefulness.

# OULINES FOR CHAPTER XIII.

## JUDAH DRIFTING TO RUIN: FROM THE FALL OF SAMARIA TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

Scripture Record—2 Chronicles, chapters 30–36.
Selections for Reading and Study—2 Chronicles 30–36; Isaiah 1, 35, 43, 53, 55.
Time—722 to 587 B.C.

### WHY JUDAH CONTINUED.

Loyalty to Jehovah.
A Continuous Dynasty.
Mercy to the House of David.

### MANASSEH'S REIGN (2 Kings 21; 2 Chronicles 33).

A Wicked King.
Manasseh's Captivity.
Manasseh's Reformation.

### THE REIGN OF JOSIAH (2 Kings 22, 23; 2 Chronicles 34, 35).

A Good King.
Repairs the Temple.
A Great Religious Revival.
The Passover Observed.
The Death of Josiah.

### JUDAH IS LED CAPTIVE TO BABYLON.

Zedekiah, Judah's Last King (2 Kings 24: 17—25: 7; 2 Chronicles 36: 10-21).
Into Captivity.
The Remnant in Jerusalem.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## JUDAH DRIFTING TO RUIN: FROM THE FALL OF SAMARIA TO THE FALL OF JERUSALEM.

AFTER the fall of Samaria and the captivity of the Ten Tribes, Judah, the Southern kingdom, stood 135 years, maintaining a precarious and uncertain existence. This period, it will be noted, is about equal to the time which has passed since the American Revolution, which began in 1776.

### WHY JUDAH CONTINUED.

Many causes contributed to the continuance of Judah after Israel had fallen.

*Loyalty to Jehovah.*—Through all of her history Judah had been more loyal to the law of Moses, while the revivals in the days of Asa and Jehoshaphat and under the leadership of Hezekiah and Isaiah had done much to call the people back from idolatry to the true worship of Jehovah.

*A Continuous Dynasty.*—Kings of the house of David successively sat upon the throne of Judah, while, as we have seen, in the Northern kingdom there was frequent intrigue and assassination, resulting in nine different reigning fami-

lies. Many of the kings of Judah were wise administrators and earnest reformers, whereas not one of the nineteen kings who ruled Israel could be called a good king.

*Mercy to the House of David.*—Apart from all other considerations, it was the frequently declared purpose of Jehovah to spare and bless Judah for the sake of his servant David. God would preserve to himself and for purposes of his own a remnant, and Judah should be that remnant to fulfill his gracious ends. Israel, the Northern kingdom, fell in the sixth year of Hezekiah, whose good and great reign we studied in our last chapter. After Hezekiah, and during the period which we are now to study, eight kings ruled over Judah.

## Manasseh's Reign.

*A Wicked King.*—At the age of twelve Manasseh came to the throne of Judah, succeeding his father Hezekiah. From the beginning of his reign he manifested such violent opposition to the pure worship of God and gave such encouragement to idolatry as causes him to stand in marked contrast with good king Hezekiah. Altars were erected to Baal and Ashtaroth throughout the realm and even in the sacred precincts of the temple itself. Manasseh caused his children to pass through the fire to Moloch, the god of the Ammonites. We read that he "used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards" (2 Chronicles 33: 6).

The prophets of God bore faithful testimony and rebuked the prevalent evils, but their voices were silenced by imprisonment and even by death, so that the streets of Jerusalem are said to have run with the blood of the righteous. The sins of Sodom and Gomorrah were introduced and the people sank to the lowest depths of moral degeneracy, so that the wickedness of the land is declared to have surpassed that of the original inhabitants whom Israel had dispossessed.

*Manasseh's Captivity.*—These excesses brought their inevitable results; weakness in the government began to be manifest. The surrounding nations, Philistia, Moab and Ammon, rose against Judah, and the armies of Assyria invaded the land, captured Jerusalem and, loading Manasseh with chains, carried him away to Babylon. If surprise is felt in the fact that the Assyrian armies carried Manasseh to Babylon instead of Nineveh, the explanation lies in the fact that Esarhaddon had conquered Babylon and at times held his court there.

*Manasseh's Reformation.*—In the loathsome dungeon of a foreign master, Manasseh had time to contrast his own wicked life and reign with the holy life and worthy rule of his father, Hezekiah, and his meditations led him to repentance and reformation. His cries of confession were mercifully heard by the Lord, and Esarhaddon pardoned his past rebellion and, permitting him to return to Jerusalem, restored him to his throne. He showed the sincerity of his repentance by

seeking to undo the evils of his earlier reign. Removing the heathen altars from the temple and reëstablishing the worship of Jehovah, he sought to bring the people back to the high ground which they had occupied in the days of his father. He learned that it is easier to corrupt a people than to restore them to purity, and was disappointed to find that his efforts at reformation met with poor success. Amon, his son, walked in the wicked ways of his father's earlier years, and after two years his iniquitous rule was cut short by assassination.

### The Reign of Josiah.

*A Good King.*—The conspirators who had slain Amon were themselves put to death, and the people placed his son, Josiah, a lad eight years of age, on the throne. This child came to be a wise king with a gracious and winsome personality, while in zeal for the law of Jehovah he exceeded all who had gone before.

When he came to his twentieth year, this being the twelfth year of his reign, he inaugurated a far-reaching campaign for the destruction of idolatry and the restoration of Jehovah worship. Many reforms had been undertaken before, but this was more thorough and systematic than any other ever known in Judah. Having destroyed the idols and heathen altars in Jerusalem, the king went in person throughout the land, extending his journey through the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh and going as far as to Naphtali, every-

where destroying temples and groves of idolatry and admonishing the people to fear and serve God.

*Repairs the Temple.*—The most significant event in Josiah's reign was the cleansing and repairing of the temple, which during the rule of his predecessors had been allowed to lapse into sad decay. For this purpose the king designated a company of influential men and authorized them to gather extensive funds, giving them full authority to prosecute the great work.

While rubbish was being removed and rooms long unused were being cleared, Hilkiah the high priest made a most important and startling discovery. During the persecutions of Manasseh and Amon there had been a widespread destruction of existing copies of the book of Law, so that the written Law had all but perished. Hilkiah now found hidden away in the temple precincts a roll containing the Law, probably the book of Deuteronomy. It is difficult for us to realize the full meaning of this discovery. The Law was immediately read in the presence of the king, who trembled exceedingly for its denunciations of the sins prevalent throughout the nation, and for its prediction of national ruin if the people should forget God.

*A Great Religious Revival.*—Stirred by the reading of the Law and perplexed as to its meaning, the high priest and other leaders sought counsel of Huldah, a prophetess, who dwelt in one of the sacred enclosures of the temple. She

declared that the threatening judgments of Jehovah would be surely visited upon the nation, though for the sake of Josiah who had sought the Lord the doom should not fall in his day. The king called a convocation of the people and ordered that the divine word against idolatry should be publicly read. The people were conscience-smitten and in deepest penitence confessed their guilt, renounced idolatry, and entered a solemn covenant to worship henceforth the true God.

*The Passover Observed.*—The three great annual feasts of the Jews were important factors in the religious life of the nation. At these seasons they presented themselves before the Lord and renewed their covenant vows. These feasts which had been neglected were now revived. Josiah proclaimed a national celebration of the Passover, and preparations were made for the observance of that feast on a scale not known before since the days of Moses.

*The Death of Josiah.*—The powerful king of Egypt, Pharaoh-necho, ambitious for foreign conquest, martialled a strong army and marched against the king of Babylon, the fortress of Charchemish on the Euphrates being his first object of attack. With Josiah he had no quarrel, but asked peaceful passage through his dominions. For reasons difficult to discern, the king of Judah, in spite of the friendly protestations and warnings of the Egyptian king, assembled an army and offered battle on the plain of Esdraelon. Going into battle in disguise, Josiah was struck

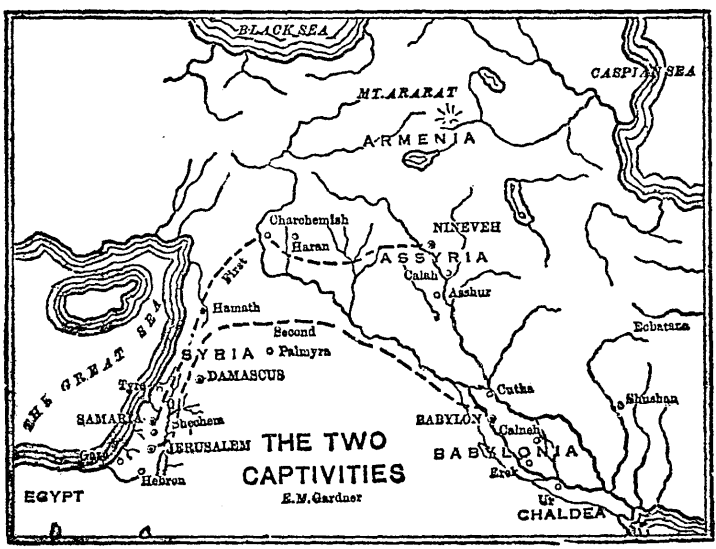
by a chance arrow and died in his chariot while he was being driven to Jerusalem. His death was an irreparable blow to the struggling kingdom of Judah, now beset with perils on every hand. Jeremiah, who entertained the warmest friendship for the king, wrote a lamentation for him, and the people mourned his death as a national loss.

The death of Josiah virtually marks the end of the kingdom of Judah. During the twenty-two years that followed, four puppet kings, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah, sat on the throne, though two of these reigned only three months each and the others were for the most part subject to foreign masters. Buffeted between Egypt on the one hand and the mighty Chaldean empire on the other, the little kingdom of Judah was for a time sustained by the very jealousies of these warring nations.

## Judah is Led Captive to Babylon.

*Zedekiah, Judah's Last King.*—A son of Josiah, but possessing none of his nobler qualities, Zedekiah was placed on the throne by Nebuchadrezzar and reigned eleven years. During the reigns of both Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, Nebuchadrezzar had attacked Jerusalem, each time carrying captive some of its people. When Zedekiah set up the standard of revolt, Nebuchadrezzar marched against Jerusalem; but for a time he gave up the attempt to take the city. Returning later, he took

the city, visiting dire punishment upon its people, and utterly destroying its walls, its Temple, and its public buildings. Zedekiah fled from the city, but was overtaken and captured in the Jordan valley. He was carried to Riblah to face his conqueror, and after he had witnessed the death of




his sons, his eyes were put out and he was sent in chains to Babylon.

*Into Captivity.*—The people, who a thousand years before had crossed the Jordan dry-shod and in faith and hope had conquered Canaan, now (587 B.C.) marched away in defeat and disgrace to taste the bitterness of exile. In 607 B.C. the Babylonians had conquered the Assyrian empire, capturing Nineveh, its capital. Thus it falls out

that while Israel was carried captive to Nineveh, Judah was taken to Babylon. The policy pursued by the Assyrians at the fall of Samaria was now followed by the Babylonians at the fall of Jerusalem. A poor remnant was left to till the soil and occupy the land.

*The Remnant in Jerusalem.*—In our further studies we will follow the destinies of the people who were carried captive to Babylonia. Over the remnant left in Judah, Gedaliah was appointed governor, and Jeremiah, in true patriotic spirit, chose to remain in the land that he might aid the governor and comfort the people. Later, contrary to the counsel of Jeremiah, the people went down in a body into Egypt, thus leaving Jerusalem and the surrounding country a desolate ruin.

## QUESTIONS.

Give an outline of Old Testament history to the fall of Samaria.

How long did the Southern kingdom stand after the fall of the Northern kingdom?

State some reasons why Judah continued after the fall of Israel.

Describe Manasseh's Reign.

What was the character of the last days of his reign?

Indicate the character of Josiah's reign.

What significant event marked Josiah's reign?

What led to the religious revival of Josiah's day?

Tell of a Passover celebrated during his reign.

How did Josiah come to his death?

Tell something of the last days of Judah.

Describe the last days of Zedekiah and tell of his death.

How long did the chosen people live in Canaan?

Give the date and indicate the location of the captivity of Judah.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER XIV.

## THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

Scripture Record—2 Chronicles, chapter 36.

Selections for Reading and Study—2 Chronicles 36; Ezekiel 1–3; Daniel 1–6.

Time—From the First Deportation to the Return under Zerubbabel, 605 to 538 B.C.

Three Successive Deportations.

THE PROPHET JEREMIAH.

Jeremiah and Josiah.
The Weeping Prophet.
Remains in Jerusalem.
Goes into Egypt.

THE DISPERSION OF THE JEWS.

THE JEWS IN CAPTIVITY.

THE PROPHET EZEKIEL.

THE PROPHET DANIEL.

Refuses the King's Wine and Meat.
Interprets Nebuchadrezzar's Dream.
Interprets Belshazzar's Vision.
Cast into a Den of Lions.

THE STORY OF ESTHER.

BENEFITS OF THE CAPTIVITY.

Idolatry Destroyed.
The Rise of the Synagogue.
A Deepened Respect for the Law of Moses.
A Longing for the Messiah.

# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.

THE history of Israel, the Northern kingdom, ends with the destruction of Samaria by the Assyrians and the carrying away of the people to the regions about Nineveh. Scattered among kindred Semitic peoples, they seem to have mingled with their neighbors, and thus became submerged among the races round about. It was not so with the people of Judah. Even in captivity they carefully preserved their genealogies and cherished the hope of a return to the land of their fathers.

*Three Successive Deportations.*—The people of Judah were carried away in three separate companies.

(1) In 605 B.C., Nebuchadrezzar, acting as captain under his father, Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, following up the victory over the Egyptians at the battle of Charchemish, marched his armies through Syria into Palestine. Appearing before Jerusalem he took the city, but for the time refrained from its destruction. To appease his wrath, and as an assurance of future submission, certain royal princes, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, along with a company

of other important personages, were given over to the invading king to be carried away to Babylon.

(2) In 598 B.C. Nebuchadrezzar, now king of Babylon, returned and stormed Jerusalem, carrying away another company of captives, among whom was Ezekiel, destined to become as priest and prophet the comforter of the exiles in their lonely sojourn in Babylonia.

(3) The same conqueror returned, this time destroying Jerusalem with terrible slaughter and carrying away practically all of its people to Babylon, 587 B.C.

## The Prophet Jeremiah.

*Jeremiah and Josiah.*—Called to be a prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah, Jeremiah became the close friend and the faithful counselor of that good king. There can be no doubt that the far-reaching reforms undertaken by Josiah were inspired and guided by the great prophet. His earnest warnings and loving instructions delivered to the people must have strengthened the king in all of his reforming work. When the valiant young king, loyal to his Assyrian ally, marched out against Pharaoh-necho and was slain in the battle of Megiddo, being brought back to Jerusalem dead in his own chariot, the prophet composed an elegy in his honor and along with all Israel wept for his death. To both Jeremiah and the nation the death of Josiah, the

reforming king, at the height of his glorious career, was a heavy blow. His godly influence and wise rule were sadly needed.

*The Weeping Prophet.*—Three of Josiah's sons reigned successively in Jerusalem, but they were mere puppets in the strong hands of their Egyptian or Babylonian masters, and the people were in a sad state. This sadness entered deep into the soul of Jeremiah: "Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" (Jeremiah 9: 1).

"Almost single-handed for the long period of above twenty years, the gentle and timid Jeremiah, strong in a higher strength, stood forth for the Lord in opposition to the united power and fury of kings, princes and priests in Jerusalem. In his communings with God we have glimpses of the dreadful expense of personal suffering at which this conflict was maintained by him; but in public, whether in prison or at large, in the palace or in the Temple, we never see him flinch from uttering the stern message committed to him" (Blaikie, in "Manual of Bible History").

*Remains in Jerusalem.*—When Jerusalem had fallen and the people were borne into captivity, Jeremiah was given the privilege of choice as to whether he should go with the captives or remain with the remnant in Palestine. Choosing to remain, he continued to exercise his ministry, faithfully declaring the word of Jehovah and

plainly declaring that the exiles should return and that Jerusalem should be restored. By his plainness of speech he frequently offended his hearers and often suffered severe persecution at their hands. By the figure of two baskets of figs, one with good ripe figs and one with bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten, he illustrated his unwelcome assertion that the exiles who had gone away were better and more worthy than those who remained behind.

*Goes into Egypt.*—When the remnant in the land decided, against the advice of Jeremiah, to go down to dwell in Egypt, the prophet accompanied them and shared their destinies. True to the principles of his long life, he pleaded with the people in Egypt to turn from their idolatries and serve Jehovah. Rejecting his admonitions, they declared that they fared better when they worshiped the goddess of heaven than when they served the Lord. The close of his life is wrapped in obscurity, though a Jewish tradition declares that he was stoned by his own people.

## The Dispersion of the Jews.

History records the removal of many nations from their native country, but we have no record of any other people being so completely driven out and so widely scattered as the Jews. Already we have seen the Northern tribes scattered throughout the regions about Nineveh; now we have the best people of Judah taken to Babylon, and to complete the desolation of the land even

the poor remnant removes to Egypt. All of this had been long predicted by their prophets, who declared that their reverses would be the result of their sins and idolatries.

## The Jews in Captivity.

*Colonists Rather Than Bondmen.*—The Babylonian kings were not so fierce and cruel as those of Assyria, and hence we find their dealing with captive nations marked by greater mildness. Indeed, the word bondage seems quite too strong in view of the freedom and prosperity which the people evidently enjoyed. Jeremiah had sent the exiles a letter in which he predicted that they should not immediately return as they hoped, but that the captivity should last seventy years. Under these conditions he brought word from Jehovah: "Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them; take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished" (Jeremiah 29: 5 6).

*Grow in Wealth.*—In the rich valley of the Euphrates, in the midst of a vigorous commercial people, the Jews, as they are henceforth known from the word Judah, enter upon a life of peace and growing wealth. The aptness for trading which has ever since marked these people doubtless first began to develop when they left the agricultural life of their own highland home and

entered upon the contests and opportunities of their new home in Babylon. They have their own rulers and are governed by their own laws; they own property and engage freely in all manner of traffic; they furnish officers for high state positions, as, for example, Daniel, Mordecai and Nehemiah. They seem to have remained together, a state within a state, or at least to have maintained their separateness in distinct communities.

### The Prophet Ezekiel.

Jehovah did not leave himself in these dark days without witness of his presence and of his merciful purposes for his people. The chief peril to which the people were now exposed was that they should lapse into the religious and moral customs of the people round about and thus become merged with the neighboring peoples. This peril was the greater because the Babylonians brought their religion into all the affairs of daily life, associating their gods with every business transaction. In view of this peril God sent prophets who with the utmost earnestness warned and instructed the people.

Chiefest among these prophets was Ezekiel, who as we have seen was carried away in the second deportation. Living on the river Chebar, probably some distance to the northwest of Babylon, he attained high position and wielded wide influence among his fellow captives. His home became a center for the leaders among the Jews. Thither they came from various quarters to hear

the priest-prophet declare the things of the Lord and to commune together concerning the affairs of their people. Shortly after the word came from Jeremiah that the captivity was to be prolonged, Ezekiel began to warn and comfort the people with his prophetic visions.

His earlier messages were largely denunciations of Egypt and Tyre, nations which had been bitter and oppressive toward the chosen people. They are the words of a patriot whose soul burned with shame and resentment for the woes and wrongs of his people. His later messages were full of gracious comfort, cheering the people with the hope of restoration to their own land. "His sun, like that of Isaiah, went down pouring on Jews and Gentiles the golden luster of Messiah's reign."

### The Prophet Daniel.

Going out with the first deportation, Daniel, who was of royal blood and royal spirit, arose to great eminence both among his own people and at the court of Babylon. Four incidents in the career of Daniel are among the most familiar of Bible stories.

*Refuses the King's Wine and Meat.*—His refusal as a youth, along with his companions, "to defile himself with the portion of the king's meat which he did eat and the wine which he did drink," constitutes a fine illustration of youthful courage. Being permitted to live for ten days on pulse and water, he and his companions, under the blessing of God, appeared fairer and better than all the

other royal youths. "And in all matters of wisdom and understanding, that the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm" (Daniel 1 : 20).

*Interprets Nebuchadrezzar's Dream.*—When the king dreamed, and was unable even to recall his dream, he demanded of his astrologers that they should tell the dream and declare its interpretation. In view of their high pretensions the demand was not unreasonable. When they were unable to declare the dream and all the wise men of the realm, including Daniel and his companions, were about to be slain, Daniel went boldly in unto the king and requested that a time should be appointed, assuring the king that he would give the interpretation of the dream. After a season of prayer he came into the king's presence and told not only the dream but its meaning, and that in such simple, straightforward language that the king was deeply impressed and fully convinced.

Acting on a generous impulse the king worshiped Daniel and commanded the people to offer to him sacrifice and sweet odors. Daniel was made governor of the whole province of Babylon, and at his request his three friends were given places of honor and distinction in the government.

*Interprets Belshazzar's Vision.*—While Belshazzar feasted a thousand of his lords and drank wine with them, there came the fingers of a man's

hand and traced certain words on the wall of the king's palace. When the enchanters of the realm could not read the writing, at the suggestion of the queen, Daniel was called in before the king and his lords. Spurning the proffered gifts of the king, he declared the meaning of the strange words:

Mene: God has numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end.

Tekel: Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.

Peres: Thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians.

In that same night, Belshazzar was slain and Babylon fell into the hands of Darius the Mede. Under the new king, Daniel seems to have continued to hold his high place in the government.

*Cast into a Den of Lions.*—His persistence in prayer and his consequent experience of being cast into the den of lions constitutes one of the most thrilling incidents of Bible history. Agreeing that they could find no occasion against Daniel save in the matter of his religion, his enemies sought a decree from the king that whoever for thirty days should kneel before any god save the king, should be put to death.

Going into his house and opening his windows toward Jerusalem, Daniel knelt three times a day and prayed and gave thanks to Jehovah. The king was distressed and sought to deliver him, but on the demand of his enemies Daniel was

cast into the den of lions, with the cheering words from the king, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." Coming next morning, the king found that Jehovah had indeed delivered his trusting servant.

Daniel lived to an advanced age and, to the end of his life, held high position and wielded wide influence. It is not impossible that he may have influenced Cyrus to issue the decree which permitted the Jews to return to Palestine. Carried away with the first captivity, Daniel lived to see the people return to their native land. Ezekiel and Daniel were contemporaries and their prophecies are alike marked by much that is mysterious and difficult of interpretation. Ezekiel was of priestly lineage, while Daniel was of royal blood. Ezekiel lived among his own people, wielding the influence of preacher and pastor, while Daniel lived at court and mightily influenced the ruling classes.

## The Story of Esther.

The exact date of the book of Esther is uncertain, but the incidents which it records occurred during the exile and they shed light on the condition of the Jews in the days of their captivity. Mordecai, a Jew, had attained a position of influence at court and Esther, his niece, a beautiful Jewish maiden, had become queen. Haman hated Mordecai and sought in consequence to destroy the whole Jewish race. Through the brave intercession of Esther, the plot

of Haman, which had all but succeeded, was revealed to the king, who hung Haman and saved the Jews. This deliverance was afterward commemorated by the joyous feast of Purim. The edict of the king indicates that the Jews had, at that time, scattered throughout all the one hundred and twenty provinces of the realm.

Before we pass to a consideration of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, we must pause to consider some

### Benefits of the Captivity.

Among these may be mentioned:

*Idolatry Destroyed.*—The tendency to idolatry seems to have been completely destroyed. Since the founding of the nation fifteen hundred years before, there had been a strangely persistent tendency to lapse into idolatry. During all of this time it is doubtful whether the race was ever wholly free from the taint of idolatry. During the captivity the people were completely purged of this evil tendency, and from the time of their return to Jerusalem they were uncompromising monotheists.

*The Rise of the Synagogue.*—In the captivity, separated from their Temple and deprived of their national feasts and worship, the people developed the custom of assembling for the reading of the Law of Moses and for prayer and fellowship. These simple gatherings seem to have given rise to the synagogue which played so important a part in all their after history.

*A Deepened Respect for the Law of Moses.*—In the midst of heathen rites and customs, surrounded by a race which, as their conquerors, felt a sense of superiority, they found themselves compelled, in self-defense and in the interest of national preservation to be loyal to their own laws and religion and to faithfully teach these to their children. Thus was developed that reverence for the Law which in our Lord's time had degenerated into legalism and formalism.

*A Longing for the Messiah.*—In the midst of their reverses and sufferings, the people were led to look earnestly for the long-promised Messiah, who should deliver them from their distresses and restore, as they supposed, their national glory. Crude as were their thoughts of the Coming One, it was yet good that their eyes should turn to the promises and that they should look and wait for his coming.

QUESTIONS.

What became of the people of the Northern kingdom after they were carried to Nineveh?

Tell of the three separate companies in which the people of Judah were carried away.

Indicate some important events in the life of Jeremiah.

Tell of the Dispersion of the Jews.

Describe the condition of the Jews in captivity.

Tell something of the life and labors of Ezekiel.

Relate some incidents in the career of Daniel.

Give the leading events in the story of Esther.

State some benefits which resulted from the captivity.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER XV.

## THE RESTORATION.

Scripture Record—Ezra, Nehemiah.

Selections for Reading and Study—Ezra 1, 5, 6, 10; Nehemiah 1, 2, 4; Haggai 1; Zechariah 14; Malachi 4.

Time—The Decree of Cyrus to the Close of Old Testament History, 538 to 391 B.C.

PROPHECIES OF RETURN.

THE MISSION OF THE PROPHETS.

THE DECREE OF CYRUS.

RETURN UNDER ZERUBBABEL.

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE.

HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH.

EZRA RETURNS AND WORKS REFORMS.

NEHEMIAH REBUILDS THE WALLS.

MALACHI AND HIS MESSAGE.

THE FOUR HUNDRED SILENT YEARS.

Under the Persians (to 331 B.C.).
Under the Greek Kings (331 to 167 B.C.).
Independent (167 to 63 B.C.).
Under the Romans (63 B.C. through New Testament Times).

STAGES IN DIVINE REVELATION.

# CHAPTER XV.

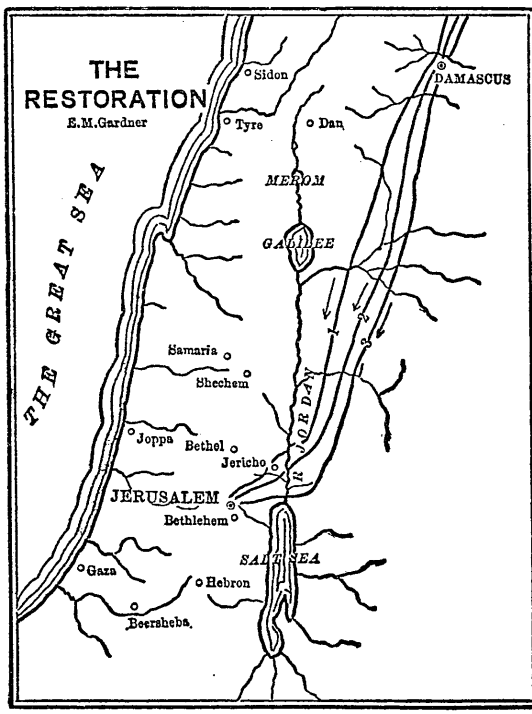
## THE RESTORATION.

RIGHTLY interpreted we may find God, his providence and purpose, in all history; but God chose to reveal himself in a peculiar way in the history of the Hebrew people. The Scriptures relate the history for the purpose of setting forth God's revelation of himself and his unfolding plan of redemption. It has been already suggested that this purpose of Scripture accounts for the fullness of the record at certain stages and for long silences at other stages. Thus between the captivity whose record we studied in the last chapter and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, which we are now to study, a period of more than half a century, we have from the sacred annalists only one incident, the release of King Jehoiachin from prison in Babylon and his elevation to a position of respect.

### PROPHECIES OF RETURN.

Even before the fall of Jerusalem, Isaiah and Ezekiel had prophesied that the city should fall and had predicted that its exiled people would return to rebuild the fallen city. During the long years of captivity Jeremiah and Ezekiel, be-

sides other prophets, had with earnestness and clearness foretold that the people should return; this message was the burden of their ministry and the basis of their appeal. These predictions




kept alive faith and hope in the hearts of the the people, and were an important factor in bringing about their own fulfillment. The prophets revived also among the people of the dispersion the memory of the glorious history of the Hebrew nation, of the promises and purposes of Jehovah,

and held before them bright visions of the part which Israel was to play in the unfolding purpose of God.

If we are to take literally Jeremiah's prediction of a captivity of seventy years (Jeremiah 25: 12), these figures may be obtained as follows: Solomon's temple destroyed 587, the second temple completed 517, seventy years.

### The Mission of the Prophets.

Having mentioned these predictions we pause to say that prophecy was rather forth-telling than fore-telling. The prediction of future events, which figures so largely in the popular conception of prophecy, was really a small part of the work of the prophets. These men of prayer and faith, inspired and guided by the Spirit of God, studied the trend of public affairs, instructed the king and the people in the ways of Jehovah, and, like faithful pastors in our own day, sought to interpret God and his providences and to draw the people from their wandering to the service and worship of Jehovah.

### The Decree of Cyrus.

"Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of Jehovah by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the

earth hath Jehovah, the God of heaven, given me; and he hath charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all his people, his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of Jehovah, the God of Israel (he is God), which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1: 1-3).

Vast empires were falling to pieces, greater kingdoms were being built on their ruins, and the whole world was in a state of unrest. Cyrus, king of Anshan, a small country lying to the northeast of Babylon, extended his rule over surrounding countries until at last he became master of Babylon and established himself in the most extensive and the most splendid kingdom the world had ever known. In the midst of these world-movements the God of Israel, mindful of his covenant with his people and of his promises to preserve and bless them, was ordering all things after the counsel of his own will. According to the word spoken by Isaiah 150 years before, when he called Cyrus by name and predicted that he should restore the captive people of God to their own land, Cyrus became master of the Medo-Persian empire, which embraced in its territory practically all of the known world.

It was this Cyrus who issued the decree given above, permitting and encouraging the Jews to return and rebuild their city and their Temple. It is not improbable, as has already been suggested, that the prophet Daniel, who was still

living and doubtless held high position at court, may have influenced Cyrus to issue this decree. "It is hardly a stretch of fancy to imagine an interview between him and the venerable Hebrew prophet who had risen so high in the councils of the Babylonian kings. We may easily suppose Daniel, after being presented to Cyrus, opening the book of the prophet Isaiah, and reading to the king the first few verses of the forty-fifth chapter. Great must have been the astonishment of Cyrus to find himself mentioned by name in that old Hebrew document, described as God's appointed instrument for setting his people free" (Blaikie, in "Manual of Bible History").

In order to aid and encourage the people Cyrus restored the sacred vessels which Nebuchadrezzar had taken from the Temple, and gave orders to the governors along the way to lend them protection. As there were three separate deportations, so there were three separate detachments which returned, a first under Zerubbabel, a second eighty years later under Ezra, and yet a third under Nehemiah.

### Return Under Zerubbabel.

It is assumed that Daniel, now an old man, deemed it wise to remain at his post in the Persian court. Zerubbabel was chosen to lead back to Jerusalem the fifty thousand people who chose to return. From the fact that the larger number of those who returned belonged to the tribe of Judah, the people, as we have noted, came to be

known as *the Jews*. It will be borne in mind that those who embraced the opportunity to return comprised probably only a small proportion of the total number of the chosen people. Those who were the more religious and patriotic would, of course, be eager to have part in an expedition which promised a restoration of the national life. Four months were required for the long journey of six hundred and fifty miles.

### Rebuilding the Temple.

It is significant that the returning exiles gave early attention to the rebuilding of their ruined Temple. As the work proceeded the Samaritans came and offered their assistance. Mixed motives prompted their offer, and the elders of the Jews probably felt that they could not in good conscience receive assistance from these semi-heathen neighbors, and hence their proffers of help were refused. Denied a part in the enterprise, the Samaritans began a long series of misrepresentations and intrigues by which they sought to have the Persian kings withdraw consent for the rebuilding of the Temple in the city. These efforts they continued with more or less success during the reign of Cyrus and of his successors, Cambyses and Smerdis.

In this connection it is interesting to consider the motives which may have prompted Cyrus in the encouragement he gave to the Jews, who must have been desirable citizens, to leave Babylon to return to that land of their fathers. In Ezra 1 : 1

we have two explanations of Cyrus' course: (1) That the word of the Lord by the mouth of the prophet might be fulfilled; (2) the Lord stirred up the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia. Further light may be shed on the problem by the fact that Cyrus was planning the conquest of Egypt and that for this purpose he needed to have in Palestine, which lay along the way to Egypt, a friendly people who would further his military plans.

## Haggai and Zechariah.

These prophets ministered during the reign of Zerubbabel in the days when the second Temple was building. When the people grew lax in their efforts to build the Temple and turned aside to build houses for themselves, Haggai rebuked their indifference and exhorted them to action. He declared that the drought and adversity which had come upon the land was the punishment of Jehovah for their sloth and self-indulgence. "Is it a time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste? . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord" (Haggai 1: 4-8).

Zechariah joined forces with Haggai and together they rebuked and entreated the people, urging that the house of Jehovah should be pushed to completion. "Thus saith the Lord of

hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 1 : 3).

Twenty years after the work was begun the new Temple, which from its builder has since been known as Zerubbabel's Temple, was completed. Its dedication, like the dedication of the former Temple, marked a significant epoch in the history of Israel. The older men who recalled the wealth and glory of the former structure wept for the inferiority of this, while the younger men rejoiced as they looked upon the consummation of their labors.

### Ezra Returns and Works Reforms.

Almost eighty years after Zerubbabel and his company of 50,000 had made their journey to Jerusalem, Ezra, with about 6,000 persons, left Babylon (458 B.C.) to reënforce and encourage his struggling countrymen. He found a sadly disorganized and demoralized state. The law of Moses had fallen into neglect, the poor were ground down by their more fortunate brethren, and the people were mingling and even intermarrying among their heathen neighbors.

Ezra set himself to work needed reforms and did much to bring the people back to purer living and to higher ideals in worship. Ezra is thought to have made a collection of the inspired books and fixed the canon of Scripture very much as it has come down to us. Trained as a priest and

deeply taught in the law of the Lord, he possessed special qualifications for this important task.

### Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls.

A character of singular simplicity and beauty, Nehemiah stands out in distinctness among the men of his day. Learning of the wretched condition of the Lord's people in Jerusalem, he secured permission from King Artaxerxes (445 B.C.), at whose court in Shushan he held high position, to go and rebuild the walls of the city. Pressing the work with courage and vigor, he had the joy after fifty-two days of seeing the walls stand complete. Some twelve years later, returning again from the court of Persia, Nehemiah wrought important reforms, cleansing the Temple, demanding the tithe for the maintenance of the Levites and forbidding the desecration of the Sabbath.

### Malachi and His Message.

The last prophet of the Old Testament, like the many who had gone before, denounced the follies and abuses of his day, especially laxity in the marriage relation, slothfulness in the service of God, and slackness in offerings to God. "Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to

receive it" (Malachi 3: 10). The closing words of his prophecy constitute a fitting close of the Old Testament Scriptures, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4: 4–6).

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## The Four Hundred Silent Years.

We have now come to the close of Old Testament history and prophecy. Between the two Testaments is a period of some 400 years, during which we have no inspired records, though from secular sources we can trace the history of the chosen people on down to the coming of the Messiah.

*Under the Persians.*—The Jews remained under the rule of the Persian kings who had permitted their return, until 331 B.C., when Alexander the Great knocked to pieces the loosely-organized empire of the Persians and inaugurated the era of Grecian triumph and glory.

*Under the Greek Kings.*—Passing under the rule of the Greek kings, Palestine became permeated with the spirit of Greek learning and philosophy. The Greek language came to be

widely used and in order to meet a growing demand for the Scriptures in the Greek tongue, the Septuagint translation was made in Alexandria about 285 B.C.

*Independent.*—In 167 B.C., when Antiochus Epiphanes had oppressed the Jews and exasperated them by his foolish excesses, Judas Maccabeus led a successful revolt and the people threw off the foreign yoke and set up their own government. For a hundred years they enjoyed rulers descended from the house of David and under the strong leadership of these native rulers they attained to something of the wealth and splendor which had marked the golden days of the united kingdom.

*Under the Romans.*—In 63 B.C., the Romans under Pompey overran Palestine, conquering Jerusalem and bringing the Jews under the power of the Romans. In 37 B.C. Herod the Great became, by the grace of the Roman emperor, the ruler of Palestine, and while he was yet king the Christ was born in Bethlehem.

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## Stages in Divine Revelation.

We began our studies with the statement that Bible history traces the dealings of God with men and brings us in gradual unfolding both revelation and redemption. In closing these studies we pause to consider the somewhat clearly marked steps of progress in this revelation.

*Before Abraham's Day.*—In this dim period men show the effect of the divine law originally written in their hearts. The revelation of this time developed chiefly the tracings and lingerings of the impress of God imparted in creation and in connection with the fall. To this original knowledge, some additions were made in connection with the murder of Abel, the flood, and the confusion of tongues.

Men knew God as creator; they had the law of the family; they had the Sabbath; they knew the principles of both sacrifice and worship; they held memories of original exalted purity, cherishing the innocence of Adam and Even in their first estate. This period produced Enoch, who walked with God and was not, for God took him, and Noah who was perfect in his generation. And yet men walked in darkness, and even the men who sought God had poor and inadequate conceptions of the divine Being.

*In Abraham's Day.*—The revelations granted Abraham may fairly be said to mark a distinct stage of progress in the unfolding plan of revelation and redemption. To Abraham God made fuller revelation of himself than he had before made, speaking repeatedly with Abraham face to face and claiming him as "the friend of God." In Abraham God began the special movement toward redemption which found its fulfillment in the death of the incarnate Son on the cross.

In claiming Abraham and his descendants for himself as a peculiar people, God declares that

hidden in this choice is a motive of mercy to all nations. This is twice emphasized in God's call to Abraham. Abraham fully recognized God's relation to the whole race; when he made plea for the cities of the Plain this significant word rises to his lips: "Shall not the Judge *of all the earth* do right?"

In Abraham's conception of God these things stand out in distinctness:

(1) Personality. God talked with Abraham face to face and in many ways clearly indicated that he was a person.

(2) Spirituality. While the divine Being condescends to meet the conditions and limitations of his servant, he yet leaves the impression that he is a spirit.

(3) Sovereignty. As shown in his choice of a man and a race among all the races of the world; and, incidentally, by his unexplained demand upon Abraham for the sacrifice of his son Isaac.

(4) Justice. This was basal in Abraham's thought of God as is indicated by his plea, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

(5) Mercy. God chose a man and created a race that through that race he might show mercy to all races.

(6) Providence. In his relations with Abraham, in his guidance and protection of his servant, in his dealings with Pharaoh in Egypt and with Lot in connection with the cities of the Plain, God's universal care and control are clearly indicated.

*In Moses' Day.*—The revelation of Abraham's day was made to a man or at most to a family; the revelation of Moses' day was made to a nation. Revelation is thus seen to be progressive and cumulative. Each stage of advance embraces all that went before, making further addditions. As the revelation to Abraham showed advance upon all that had gone before, so the revelation of Moses' day marks distinct progress. Gathering up all that had been revealed to Abraham, Moses and the men of his day went further in their conception of God, reaching high planes of reverence and worship. When Israel crossed the Jordan into Canaan, they brought with them the writings of Moses; they brought the wonderful visions and revelations of Mt. Sinai; they brought the tabernacle with its altar and its ark; they brought a nation-wide knowledge of the one holy, spiritual God. They brought with them this wonderful conception of the divine Being: "Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15: 11.)

*In David's Day.*—Through Samuel and David revelations were granted which went far to enrich and complete all previous revelation. Thus their day may be said to mark a distinct stage in progress.

Samuel developed and illustrated the privilege and power of prayer, especially intercessory prayer. David developed and illustrated the privilege and beauty of praise. In the revelations to

Abraham and Moses the elements of justice and majesty are prominent; in David's day the matchless grace and compassion of the divine Being came out in fuller distinctness. The stage of revelation attained in David's day, while embracing all that had gone before, went further and rounded out more perfectly the conception of God, of his attributes, and of his relations to men.

Compare the conceptions of God and of his preeminence in holiness and power and mercy, as these are found among the Hebrews and expressed in the Scriptures, with the notions which prevailed in Egypt and Assyria and the nations round about. The Egyptians were worshiping bulls and beetles; the Assyrians were worshiping the moon and many other gods; the Canaanites were worshiping with unnamable vice certain gods which they associated with the sources of life. These heathen gods were in frequent quarrels among themselves, being jealous of each other and even of men. How, in the midst of such sordid idolatry, did the Hebrews get their conception of the one, personal, spiritual, holy God, who reigns supreme over all men and nations? The thoughtful student who will take pains to compare the exalted conceptions of Jehovah held among these Hebrew people with the conceptions entertained by the civilized and cultured peoples of ancient times must be persuaded that the one true God in a special way made revelation of himself to the children of Jacob.

*In Isaiah's Day.*—Inasmuch as Isaiah was the greatest among the prophets, we may think of him as representing the era of prophecy at its height; and thus we may say that Isaiah's day marked a stage in revelation. Isaiah and the prophets possessed all that had been before revealed, but they went further, grasping and revealing the purpose of God to visit his people as Messiah. This purpose had indeed been dimly forecast in the earliest Old Testament records, and had later come out with increasing clearness, but in the days of Isaiah and the prophets who followed him the promise of the Messiah was announced with emphasis and great clearness.

Isaiah declares that the Coming One shall be born of a virgin, he tells the names by which he shall be called, he declares his humiliation and his exaltation, and he announces his mission to save from sin. His prophetic portrait of the suffering Messiah has something of the clearness of the historic records found in the Gospels.

*In Christ's Day.*—Here we have marked advance toward the consummation and completion of divine revelation. The promise in the garden and all the promises of the Old Testament have now their fulfillment. In the incarnate Son with his divine teachings and his atoning death we have a distinct stage in the plan of revelation and redemption. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath ap-

pointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Hebrews 1: 1-4).

*In Paul's Day.*—As the chieftest of the apostles, Paul may represent the apostolic age, the period in which revelation reached its real consummation. After the ascension of our Lord and during this apostolic period, the office and work of the Holy Spirit, the substitutionary atonement as central in the plan of salvation, the organization and work of churches, these great doctrines were developed for all time. This constitutes the last crowning stage of divine revelation.

We may sum up these seven stages as follows:

(1) *Before Abraham's day,* men walked in the dim light of natural revelation.

(2) *In Abraham's day,* God revealed his name and his nature to a man and a family.

(3) *In Moses' day,* previous revelations were augmented and became the possession of a nation.

(4) *In David's day,* all former revelation was further increased, the conception of the divine character was enlarged, and individual and national worship was enriched.

(5) *In Isaiah's day,* a distinct step in advance was made in that the nature and mission of the Coming Messiah were clearly announced.

(6) *In Christ's day,* the incarnate Son wrought the consummation and fulfillment of all that was revealed and promised in the Old Testament.

(7) *In Paul's day,* there was a final development of the doctrines of grace and a full statement concerning church organization and life.

## QUESTIONS.

What is the purpose of the history which we have studied?

Tell of the prophecies of the return of Judah.

What was the mission of the prophets?

What decree did Cyrus issue regarding the Jews?

What is the origin of the phrase, *Jews?*

Tell of the return under Zerubbabel.

What opposition did the Jews encounter while rebuilding the temple and the walls of Jerusalem?

How may we account for the encouragement given by Cyrus to the Jews?

To what end was the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah chiefly devoted?

When did Ezra come to Jerusalem?

What reforms did he work?

State what Nehemiah did on each of his visits to Jerusalem.

Tell of Malachi and his message

Indicate four steps in the history of the Jews between the close of Old Testament history and the opening of New Testament history.

Name the stages in Divine Revelation, indicating the nature of each.

# OUTLINES FOR CHAPTER XVI.

## CHART OF OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Genesis | 1. The World Before Abraham (from Creation to 2000 B.C.)<br>2. The Days of the Patriarchs (500 years) | |
| Exodus<br>Leviticus<br>Numbers<br>Deuteronomy | 3. The Exodus (40 years) | |
| Joshua | 4. The Conquest (10 years) | |
| Judges<br>Ruth | 5. The Judges (348 years) | |
| | | Job (?)<br>Psalms<br>Proverbs<br>Ecclesiastes<br>Song of Solomon |
| I. Samuel<br>II. Samuel | 6. The Kingdom (120 years) | |
| | | Isaiah<br>Jeremiah<br>Lamentations<br>Ezekiel<br>Daniel<br>Hosea<br>Joel<br>Amos<br>Obadiah<br>Jonah<br>Micah<br>Nahum<br>Habakkuk<br>Zephaniah |
| I. Kings<br>II. Kings | | |
| | 7. The Two Kingdoms (259 yrs.) | |
| I. Chronicles<br>II. Chronicles | 8. Judah Alone (135 years)<br>9. The Captivity (52 years) | |
| Ezra<br>Nehemiah<br>Esther | 10. The Restoration (135 years) | Haggai<br>Zechariah<br>Malachi |

# CHAPTER XVI.

## OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY BY BOOKS: A REVIEW.

The Chart given on the preceding page is designed to set forth the relation of the Old Testament books to the ten periods of Old Testament history as this history has been developed in the preceding chapters.

In the first column are the seventeen books of history. Name them.

In the second column are the ten periods of Old Testament history. Name them, giving length of each.

In the third column are to be found the five poetical books, followed by the seventeen prophetical books produced during the several periods indicated. Name these poetical and prophetical books.

The connecting braces indicate the historical book or books which record a given period, as they also indicate in the case of the poetical and prophetical books the period in which the books were produced.

The seventeen historical books, from Genesis to Esther, relate Old Testament history from the creation to the close of the period covered by the

Old Testament record. The poetical and prophetical books, from Job to Malachi, were produced at various intervals during this time.

Having studied the general trend of Old Testament history it will now be well to study the outlines of the historical books in order to know the history by books.

## The Historical Books of the Old Testament.

Genesis (Fifty chapters). By Moses.

I. The world before Abraham. Chapters 1-11.

II. The days of the Patriarchs. Chapters 12-50.

Exodus (Forty chapters). By Moses.

I. Historical—Out of Egypt and before Sinai. Chapters 1-18.

II. Legislative—Regulations for the social, moral and religious life of Israel. Chapters 19-40.

Leviticus (Twenty-seven chapters). By Moses.

I. Laws concerning sacrifices, priests and purification. Chapters 1-16.

II. Laws concerning separation and feasts. Chapters 17-27.

NUMBERS (Thirty-six chapters). By Moses.

I. From Sinai to Kadesh. Chapters 1-12.
II. The spies sent. Chapters 13, 14.
III. The thirty-eight years of wandering. Chapters 15-36.

DEUTERONOMY (Thirty-four chapters). By Moses.

I. Moses first address. History of the forty years' journey. Chapters 1-4.
II. Second address. Exposition and discussion of various laws. Chapters 5-26.
III. Third address. Concerning the Ten Commandments, the blessing and the cursing. Chapters 27-30.
IV. Choice of Joshua and death of Moses. Chapters 31, 34.

(For a different outline of Deuteronomy, see page 91.)

JOSHUA (Twenty-four chapters). Probably by Joshua.

I. Conquest of Canaan. Chapters 1-12.
II. Allotment of lands. Chapters 13-22.
III. Joshua's two farewell addresses. Chapters 23, 24.

JUDGES (Twenty-one chapters). Probably by Samuel.

I. Introductory. Chapters 1, 2.
II. Deliverance through the Judges. Chapters 3-16.

III. Migration of the Danites and war against Benjamin. Chapters 17-21.

RUTH (Four chapters). Author unknown.

I. Ruth in Moab. Chapter 1.
II. Ruth gleaning in Boaz's field. Chapter 2.
III. Ruth's marriage to Boaz. Chapters 3, 4.

1 AND 2 SAMUEL (Thirty-one chapters) (Twenty-four chapters). Author unknown.

I. The judgeship of Samuel. 1 Samuel 1-12.
II. Saul's reign. 1 Samuel 13-31.
III. David's reign. 2 Samuel.

1 AND 2 KINGS (Twenty-two chapters) (Twenty-five chapters). Author unknown.

I. Solomon's reign. 1 Kings 1-11.
II. The two kingdoms. 1 Kings 12-22 and 2 Kings 1-17.
III. Judah alone. 2 Kings 18-25.

1 AND 2 CHRONICLES (Twenty-nine chapters) (Thirty-six chapters). Author unknown.

I. Genealogies. 1 Chronicles 1-9.
II. David's reign. 1 Chronicles 10-29.
III. Solomon's reign. 2 Chronicles 1-9.
IV. Judah. 2 Chronicles 10-29.
V. Judah alone. 2 Chronicles 30-36.

EZRA (Ten chapters). By Ezra.

I. Return and rebuilding of the temple. Chapters 1-6.

II. Ezra working reforms. Chapters 7-10.

NEHEMIAH (Thirteen chapters). By Nehemiah.

I. The wall of Jerusalem rebuilt. Chapters 1-7.

II. A revival of Scripture study. Chapters 8-10.

III. The walls dedicated and reforms wrought. Chapters 11-13.

ESTHER (Ten chapters). Author unknown.

I. Esther becomes queen. Chapters 1, 2.

II. Haman plans to destroy the Jews. Chapter 3.

III. Esther pleads for her people. Chapters 4-7.

IV. The Jews destroy their enemies. Chapters 8-10.

## QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW AND EXAMINATION.

The class teacher will select and submit to the class at least sixteen questions from this list. See directions, page 5.

1. Give the ten periods of Old Testament history. See page 241.
2. What time was covered by each of these periods?

I.

3. Name five leading events of "The World before Abraham."
4. What is said to be the purpose of Bible history?
5. What is the especial value of the record of the fall?
6. Why did Cain murder Abel?
7. Tell briefly the story of the flood.
8. Tell of the building of the Tower of Babel.

II.

9. Name at least five events in the life of Abraham in the order in which they occurred.
10. What in the case of Isaac and his sons was involved in the birthright blessing?
11. Who sold his birthright? For what?
12. Relate the story of Isaac blessing Jacob.

III.

13. Name some leading incidents in the life of Jacob.
14. Indicate the outlines of Joseph's career.
15. Characterize briefly the experiences of Israel in Egypt.
16. Give some reasons which explain this long period in Egypt.
17. What time separates Abraham and Moses?

IV.

18. Tell of the birth of Moses.
19. Describe the flight of Moses to Arabia and tell of his life there.
20. Moses was called. Where? how? to what?
21. Tell something of the contest with Pharaoh.

22. What memorial feast was instituted in connection with the departure from Egypt?
23. Indicate some signal miracles wrought during the journey from Egypt to Sinai.

V.

24. What three incidents of special note occurred before Mount Sinai?
25. Tell something of the tabernacle.
26. What occurred at Kadesh-barnea?
27. Relate at least one incident which occurred during the Wilderness Wanderings.
28. Give in outline the life of Moses.
29. Describe the death and burial of Moses.

VI.

30. How was the faith of Israel challenged in the call to enter Canaan?
31. Describe the capture of Jericho.
32. What led to the defeat before Ai?
33. Account for the fact that Joseph was buried in Canaan.
34. Tell of the conquest of Canaan.

VII.

35. Describe the time of the Judges.
36. Name five of the Judges and tell against whom each of the five fought.
37. Give in outline the story of Ruth.

VIII.

38. How does Samuel rank among the Judges?
39. Why did Israel desire a king?
40. In what two divisions may we consider the life of Saul?
41. Tell of Saul's last battle.
42. What in the divine mind was to be the nature of the kingdom?

IX.

43. Give in outline the life of David.
44. Name some events of David's life in Jerusalem.
45. What relation does David sustain to the Book of Psalms?

## X.

46. Name some leading events in the life of Solomon.
47. What three books of Scripture are ascribed to Solomon?
48. Why was the kingdom divided?

## XI.

49. Describe the first king of the Northern kingdom.
50. How long did the Northern kingdom stand?
51. What event distinguishes the reign of Omri?
52. What was the character of Ahab?
53. Name some important events in the life of Elijah.
54. Name some miracles wrought by Elisha.
55. What was the character of King Jehu?
56. Describe the reign of Jeroboam II.
57. What is the real message of the book of Jonah?
58. What was the burden of the messages of Hosea and Amos?
59. When was Israel led captive? To what country?

## XII.

60. Compare the Northern and Southern kingdoms, indicating some advantages which each possessed.
61. Tell of the relations which existed between Israel and Judah.
62. What was the general character of Rehoboam's reign?
63. What was the character of the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat?
64. What special service did Joash render?
65. How long did Uzziah reign?
66. Describe the reign of Ahaz.
67. What was the character of Hezekiah's reign? Name some leading events of his reign.
68. When did Isaiah live? Give the two main divisions in the outline of his prophecy.

## XIII.

69. How long did Judah stand after the fall of Samaria?
70. Give some reasons to account for the fact that Judah continued after Israel had fallen.
71. What was the character of Manasseh's reign?
72. Name some important events of Josiah's reign.

73. Tell of the death of Josiah.
74. Describe Zedekiah's reign and tell how it ended.

XIV.

75. What king carried the captives of Judah to Babylon?
76. Tell of Jeremiah in his relation to Josiah.
77. Describe the last days of Jeremiah.
78. What is meant by the Dispersion?
79. What was the condition of the Jews in captivity?
80. Concerning Ezekiel, indicate (1) his home, (2) his character, (3) his service.
81. Name some incidents in the career of Daniel.
82. Tell briefly the story of Esther.
83. How and when did the synagogue have its rise?
84. Indicate some benefits of the captivity.

XV.

85. What books record the restoration?
86. What prompted Cyrus to issue the decree permitting the return of the Jews to Jerusalem?
87. Name three leaders of this period.
88. Who rebuilt the temple?
89. What special service did Ezra render?
90. What great work did Nehemiah accomplish?
91. What was the burden of Malachi's message?
92. Outline the history of the Jews during "the four hundred silent years."

XVI.

93. Name the ten periods of Old Testament history.
94. Indicate the length of each of the periods of Old Testament history.
95. Name the book (or books) which records each of the periods of Old Testament history.
96. What poetical books were produced during the period which we call "the kingdom?"
97. What prophetical books were produced during the periods "The Two Kingdoms," "Judah Alone," and "The Captivity"?
98. What books of prophecy were produced during the period which we call "The Restoration"?

# A CHART OF OLD TESTAMENT HISTORY.

FOR PURPOSES OF DRILL AND REVIEW.

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(Taken substantially from the New Normal Manual.)

## I. THE WORLD BEFORE ABRAHAM.

Genesis 1–11. Creation to 2000 B.C.

1. Creation. Genesis 1–2.
2. The Fall. Genesis 3.
3. Cain and Abel. Genesis 4.
4. The Flood. Genesis 6–9.
5. The Confusion of Tongues. Genesis 11.

## II. THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

Genesis 12–50. Time, 2000–1500 B.C.

1. Abraham and His Wanderings. Genesis 12–25.
2. Isaac, the Son of Promise. Genesis 25, 26.
3. Jacob and His Twelve Sons. Genesis 27–36.
4. Joseph, the Deliverer of His People. Genesis 37–50.
5. Israel in Egypt. Genesis 46–50; Exodus 1–2.

## III. THE EXODUS.

Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. 1500–1460 B.C.

1. Moses Called. Exodus 1–4.
2. Out of Egypt. Exodus 5–18.
3. Before Sinai. Exodus 19–40, and Leviticus.
4. Wilderness Wanderings. Numbers.
5. Preparation for Canaan. Deuteronomy.

## IV. THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

Book of Joshua, 1460–1450 B.C.

1. Into Canaan. Joshua 1–5.
2. Jericho is Taken. Joshua 6.
3. Ai is Captured. Joshua 7, 8.
4. The Law is Ratified. Joshua 8.
5. The Conquest and Allotment of the Land. Joshua 9–24.

### V. The Judges.

Judges and Ruth. 1450–1102 B.C.

1. The Period Characterized.
2. The Judges. Judges 2–16.

### VI. The Kingdom.

1 Samuel 8 to 1 Kings 11; 1 Chronicles 10 to 2 Chronicles 9. 1102–982 B.C.

1. The Rise of the Kingdom.
2. The Reign of Saul. 1 Samuel 13–31.
3. The Reign of David. 2 Samuel; 1 Chronicles.
4. The Reign of Solomon. 1 Kings 1–11; 2 Chronicles 1–9.

### VII. The Two Kingdoms.

1 Kings 12 to 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 10–28. 982–722 B.C.

1. Causes of the Division.
2. The Kingdoms Compared.
3. Their Relations to Each Other.
4. Israel, the Northern Kingdom.
5. Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

### VIII. Judah Alone.

2 Chronicles 29–36. 722–587 B.C.

1. Why Judah Continued.
2. Eight Kings of Judah.
3. Four Prophets (Jeremiah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk).
4. Taken Captive to Babylon. 587 B.C.

### IX. The Babylonian Captivity.

Daniel, Ezekiel. 587 to 538 B.C.

1. Its Cause (sin and worldly policies).
2. Its Location (Babylonia).
3. Its Condition (mild bondage).
4. Its Prophets (Ezekiel, Daniel).

5. Its Benefits.
   (1) Monotheism fixed.
   (2) Education developed (the synagogue arose).
   (3) Respect for the Law deepened.
   (4) Expectation of the Messiah quickened.

### X. The Restoration.

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. 538–391 B.C.

1. The Occasion (Accession of Cyrus).
2. Under Zerubbabel (Who rebuilds the Temple).
3. Under Ezra (Who works reforms).
4. Under Nehemiah (Who rebuilds the walls).
5. Prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi).

### Between the Testaments.

391–5 B.C.

1. Under Persian Rule to 331 B.C.
2. Under Greek Kings, 331 to 167 B.C.
3. Independent (Maccabees), 167 to 63 B.C.
4. Under Roman Rule, 63 B.C. through New Testament Times.

## A DIFFERENT OLD TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY.

Old Testament chronology constitutes a difficult and uncertain subject. Happily we do not need to know the exact dates of the history in order to gain its message. We have in these Studies followed Beecher's "The Dated Events of the Old Testament."

Many Old Testament scholars accept, with minor variations, the schedule of dates as given below.*

| JUDAH. | ISRAEL. |
|---|---|
| Rehoboam 937. | Jeroboam 937–915. |
| Abijam 920–917. | Nadab 915–913. |
| Asa 917–876. | Baasha 913–889. |
| | Elah 889, Zimri 887. |
| Jehoshaphat 876–851. | Omri 887–875. |
| Jehoram 851–843. | Ahab 875–853. |
| Ahaziah 843–842. | Ahaziah 853–852. |
| | Jehoram 852–842. |
| Athaliah 842–836. | Jehu 842–814. |
| Jehoash 836–796. | Jehoahaz 814–797. |
| | Jehoash 797–781. |
| Amaziah 796–782. | Jeroboam II 781–740. |
| | Zechariah, Shallum |
| Uzziah 782–735. | Menahem 738. |
| | Pekahiah 735. |
| Jotham regent to 735. | |
| | Pekah 735–734. |
| Ahaz 735–715. | Hoshea 734–722. |

* From "Classbook of Old Testament History," by Dean George Hodges.

## SOME CHOICE OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES.

Genesis 1: 1–5; 6: 5–8; 12: 1–4; 13: 14–17; 22: 1–3; 28: 10–15; 28: 20–22; 32: 28; 35: 9–13; 50: 24–26.

Exodus 3: 1–10; 4: 10–12; 12: 11–14; 14: 13–14; 15: 11–14; 20: 1–17; 32: 30–35; 33: 18–23; 34: 5–8; 35: 20–21.

Leviticus 19: 32; 19: 35–37; 27: 30. Numbers 6: 22–27; 10: 33–36; 14: 6–10; 24: 12, 13.

Deuteronomy 1: 21; 3: 23–26; 4: 1, 2; 4: 25–40; 6: 1–13; 7: 6–11; 11: 22–32; 28: 1–68; 29: 29; 30: 19, 20; 32: 7–14; 32: 29–33.

Joshua 1: 1–9; 7: 10–13; 23; 24. Judges 2: 6, 7; 6: 11–16; 8: 22–23. Ruth 1: 16, 17.

1 Samuel 2: 1–10; 12: 1–4; 12: 20–25; 15: 22–23. 2 Samuel 10: 12; 22: 1–4; 23: 1–5. 1 Kings 2: 1–3; 8: 12–53; 10: 6–9; 17: 1–7. 2 Kings 5: 10–14. 1 Chronicles 17: 16–27; 29: 11–13. 2 Chronicles 1: 7–12; 14: 11; 31: 20, 21.

Ezra 7: 10; 9: 6. Nehemiah 1: 4–6. Esther 4: 13–17.

Job 13: 15. Psalms 1, 23, 24, 67, 96, 121. Proverbs 1: 7. Ecclesiastes 12: 13, 14. Song of Solomon 8: 7.

Isaiah 43: 1, 2; 53: 6. Jeremiah 2: 13; 9: 1. Lamentations 3: 22, 23. Ezekiel 18: 23. Daniel 12: 2, 3.

Hosea 14: 1. Joel 2: 28. Amos 5: 14. Obadiah 3. Jonah 4: 11. Micah 7: 8. Nahum 1: 3. Habakkuk 2: 14. Zephaniah 3: 17. Haggai 2: 9. Zechariah 13: 1. Malachi 4: 1–6.

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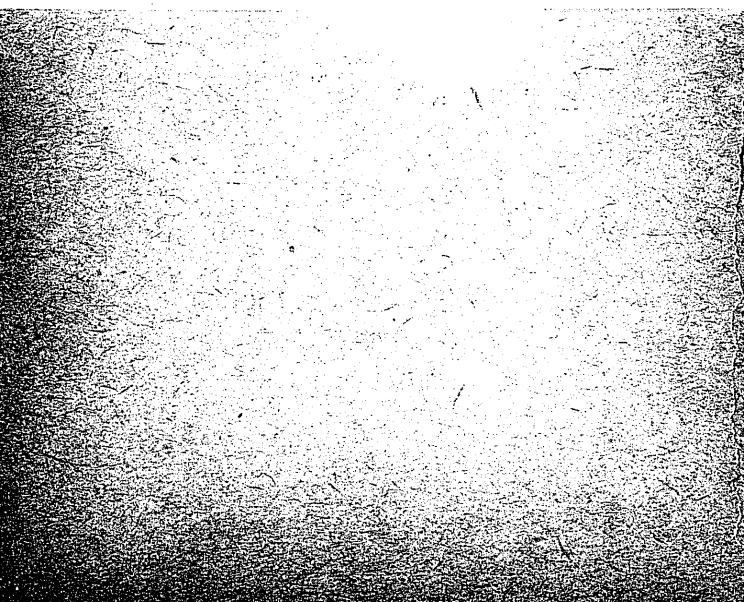

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